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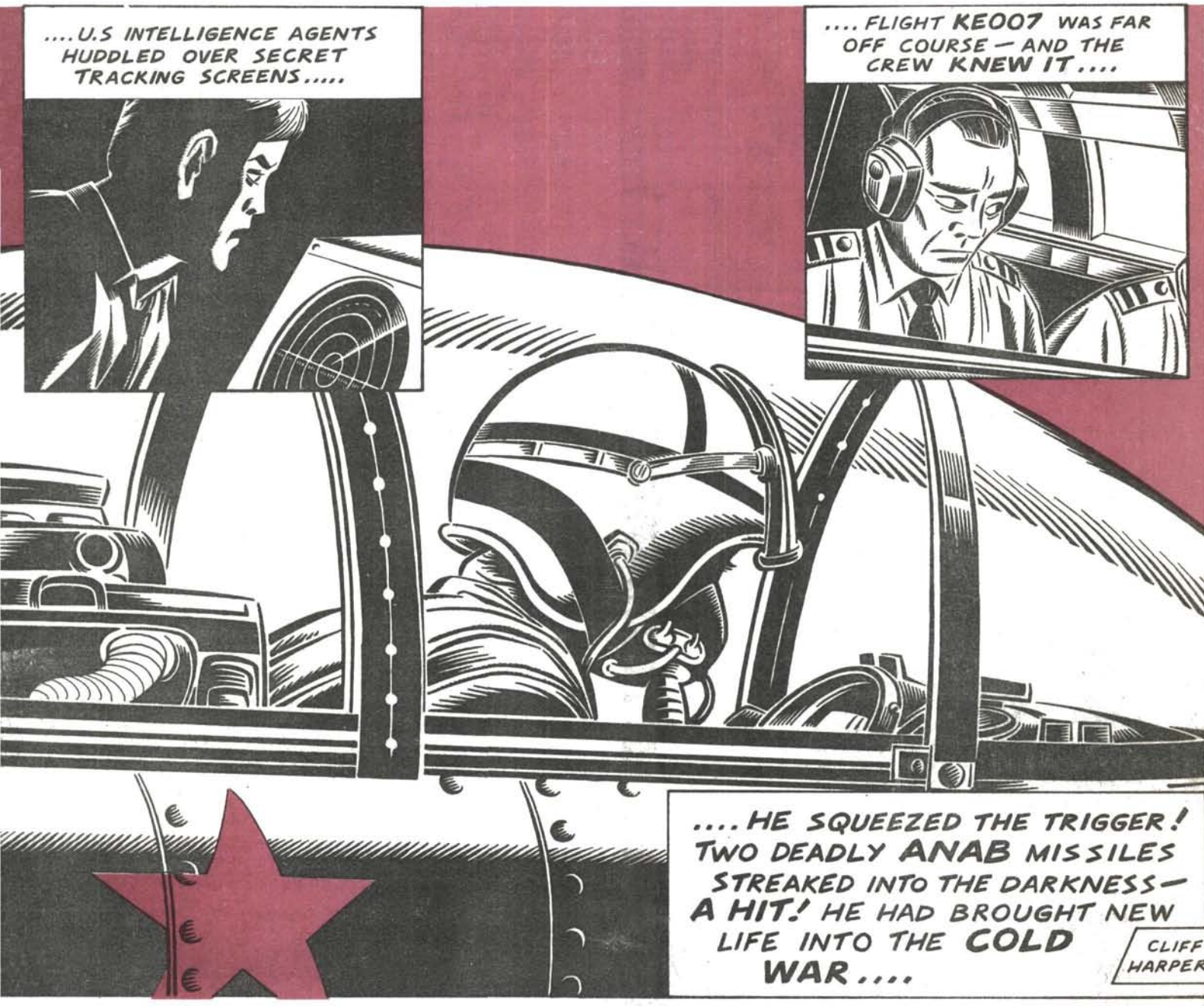
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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Vol 109 No 2823 26 April 1985

Why the Charter scares Thatcher

LAST WEEK the news leaked out that a new 'think tank' was being launched. Its focus is to be unemployment and what should be done about it. Its assumption is that there must be and is an alternative to the neo-classical economic policies to which this country in particular, but also much of the rest of the industrial world, has been subjected over the past six years.

It has not been established how the news leaked and the project has been known to enough people for so long that perhaps it is surprising that there was no hint of what was afoot earlier. But asking the question of whose interest stood to be served by a disruptive premature leak of the plan to have an Employment Institute to conduct research in this area and a Charter for Jobs as the new campaign's rally point, produces the inevitable conclusion that the venture had come to the ears of the government, that it felt worried by it and that a bit of spoiling was thought to be the order of the day. (At this stage we need to declare an interest in the sense that of the seven working journalists associated with the council of the new institute, two — Hugh Stephenson and Peter Kellner — are on the staff of the *New Statesman*.)

The government had every reason to be worried. Those who have lent their names and support to the proposal constitute a substantial cross-section of the British political and academic establishment. To an extraordinary extent, despite six years of continuously rising and totally unpredicted levels of unemployment, the Thatcher government has managed to hold rhetorical centre stage with the proposition that there is no alternative to the economic policies that have been and are being pursued.

When Opposition politicians claimed otherwise, they failed to make an impact because until now they have failed sufficiently to persuade a majority that their proposed policies could be financed or would produce any substantial results. When dissident Tories, like Edward Heath or Francis Pym spoke out in code or *en clair* they could be discounted as embittered political losers seeking revenge. But if a body, backed by people of most political persuasions and by people of none, is to be formed around the notion that the central plank of the government's economic strategy is wrong and demonstrably wrong, then Mrs Thatcher is right to sense that something politically dangerous to her position is on the move.

The intellectually disreputable trick that Thatcherism has managed to pull over economic policy has been, by constant confident repetition of assertions for which there is precious little theoretical and absolutely no empirical evidence, to shift the terms of reference within which political economy is discussed. The person in the street, the media interviewer, the Whitehall civil servant have all been driven to accept the notion that British economic history in the 20 years up to 1979 was a story of accelerating failure, which left no alternative open but Thatcherism. The profession of economists must bear a substantial responsibility for the virtually total failure to counter this stream of nonsensical theory. With a few notable exceptions, like the indefatigable Lord Kaldor at Cambridge, the profession, having proved to its own intellectual satisfaction that what was

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being talked was nonsense, either retired into itself or made the necessary accommodation with the prevailing political wind.

The time, in short, has come for most of the old Keynesian truths and insights to be re-proclaimed with a non-partisan confidence that comes most effectively from a non-partisan campaign. The truth is that we can now look back on the two decades and more that Thatcherism sought to castigate as a period of economic failure and see it as a kind of Golden Age in comparison with what we have been and are experiencing. If one reflects also that the dismal economic performance of the United Kingdom since 1979 has been during the peak period of North Sea oil revenues, the contrast with previous times is even more marked and even more disgraceful.

As no doubt the government hoped, the premature leaking of the initiative has caused ructions within the Left. It has variously been argued that for prominent members of the Labour leadership — Denis Healey, Roy Hattersley, Michael Meacher — to join such a non-political campaign dilutes Labour's own assault on the government just at the point when the government is clearly rattled, when Mrs Thatcher is showing real signs of losing touch with political reality and when Labour is at last edging ahead in the opinion polls. Alternatively and in contradiction it has been argued that, if front bench politicians are to be active in the new campaign then John Prescott, Labour spokesperson on employment, should have been asked to carry the party's banner on the new institute.

There is some point in these arguments, but not much. If protocol had required official party spokespersons to be invited to join the institute, then it would have seemed to have party political bias if the Minister of Employment had not been invited to join. But if Mr Tom King was part of the institute, it would have been pointless, since he would have been forced to veto or dissent from every suggestion which appeared to contradict or criticise a Thatcherite attitude to employment or lose his job.

As for the more general point, it is in the nature of a non-partisan, single-issue campaign — take CND for example — that it overlaps and at times creates confusion with the political campaigns run by political parties themselves. But the overwhelmingly most important political requirement in economic policy today is to change the language in which often difficult and mathematical concepts are communicated to the ordinary voter.

A broadly based campaign is much better placed to achieve a situation in which the majority come to accept, in contradiction to Thatcherism, that the present level of unemployment is wasteful and socially corrosive; that the government can and must stimulate the creation of more jobs; that extra spending could reinvigorate our urban areas and that in recession there is nothing wrong for government to borrow more for sensible purposes; and, above all, that government *has* a responsibility for those who are unemployed. To argue that the Left should have no part of such a campaign, because it is better to allow the contradictions of Thatcherism to heighten themselves would by cynical political opportunism of the worst kind. □

Let's hear it for Meacher

MICHAEL MEACHER clearly threw the Labour leadership with his 'Green Paper' on reforming the social security system. And no doubt from the point of view of knockabout party politics the proposals that he put forward for financing part of the improvements for those less well off by abolishing housing benefit and mortgage tax relief in order to spend the £7 billion thus saved on other socially more important things was a hostage to fortune.

But his discussion document was raising questions that the Left has preferred not to face in public. The Thatcherite assault on the whole fabric of the welfare state was planned before the last election, put on the shelf in order not to frighten the electorate in 1983 and has now been coming together in the Fowler reviews that have been going on for months. Yet through all this period Labour has not produced much of a constructive discussion of what directions a socialist welfare state should take over the next decade and more. The Labour reaction to leaks of Tory intentions and signs of Tory actions has been just that—reaction, in defence of the status quo, particularly where any proposals involved a threat to jobs in the public sector.

So far as it goes this is an important reaction, particularly in defence of the assault that the government has been mounting below the surface on the National Health Service. But there needs also to be a more confident public debate on the Left about positive reforms in the area of social provision. As it is most of the battles of ideas seem to have been going on within the Tory government itself, with those who want to redistribute within the existing structure fighting off those who want to make cuts in order to have money to give back to the better off.

Instead of the agenda for this debate being set by the Left, the DHSS Minister Norman Fowler seems to have made the most of the obviously correct points that the social security system is part of economic policy as a whole and should be treated as such; and that it has centrally to do with the distribution and inequalities of income. Michael Meacher seemed to be trying rather frantically to get in on that debate before the Fowler reviews were over and published. In that context the quite unjustified distortion of our tax system in favour of owner-occupiers is something that any honest radical government would want to phase out. Meacher should not be castigated as he has been for saying so. □

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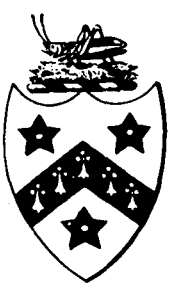
The Gresham Lectures
Summer Term 1985



Divinity:	*Professor G. N. Stanton*
1 May	Jesus on Wealth
8 May	Jesus on Violence
15 May	Jesus on the Poor
22 May	Jesus on Health
Law:	*Professor C. M. Schmitthoff*
30 May	Bills of Exchange and Letters of Credit
6 June	Charter Parties and Bills of Lading
13 June	Principles of Insurance Law
Rhetoric:	*Professor J. M. Pick*
9 May	The Improving Arts: The London of Henry Irving
30 May	The Media and the Live Audience
6 June	The Failure of the Subsidy System: Our Contemporary Crisis

All of these lectures are **free** and open to the public and will be held at **Gresham College, Level 12, Frobisher Crescent, The Barbican, London EC2** at **6.00 p.m.**

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BATTLE FOR A TRUE VERDICT ON BAIGRIE

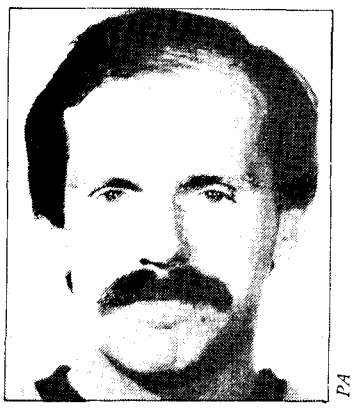
DRIVEN OUT of his first hugger-mugger intentions by the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL), the natty Dr Paul Knapman, London's youngest coroner, will re-open the adjourned inquest on James Baigrie 'the Earls Court gun-man' this Tuesday 29 April at Westminster coroner's court. MELISSA BENN and KEN WORPOLE report on the struggle to stop authority free-skating over the incident

KNAPMAN originally tried to hold the inquest only 10 days after Baigrie shot himself during the Earls Court siege last month. A last-minute adjournment was granted (*NS* 5 April). NCCL, acting as solicitors to the Baigrie family, has used the time to take statements from (so far) eight people who knew Baigrie (or Brian Robertson as he was also known) or who observed the siege.

The coroner is understood to have taken no civilian statements at all, but has set aside two days for the inquest next week and will hear it as a 'death in police custody', with a jury. NCCL legal officer Marie Staunton sets out the public interest in the case as: 'We want to make sure that the reality of what happened comes out, and ensure that the court looks carefully at the way sieges are dealt with by the police and the media'.

Of particular significance in this regard will be the reports of two pathologists showing that Baigrie had no drugs in his bloodstream at all. Yet Commander John Perrett, who supervised the siege, told a press conference during the siege that Baigrie had amphetamines in his blood. An example of the headlines that followed was the London *Standard's* banner headline of 21 March, *Siege Man on Drugs*.

The family hope an alternative picture of Baigrie will emerge at the inquest — one far from the 'drug crazed killer' kind of story that saturated the media for the siege's duration. Baigrie had always proclaimed his innocence of the murder for which he was convicted.



PA

Mystery about 'drugs' — Baigrie

He was a man who inspired affection and admiration in many who knew him. And he had apparently never taken a drug in his life, being something of a fitness fanatic. His escape from prison 18 months ago demonstrated considerable agility.

Distortions of the truth around such incidents aren't uncommon. After the shooting of Stephen Waldorf and again after the death of Colin Roach (the young man found dead in the front of Stoke Newington police station in January 1983) the police leaked damaging background information to the press.

Onslaught on family

Although in contact with the family during the siege, the police let them find out about the death via breakfast television. With all the media then encamped on their doorstep the strain took its toll. Baigrie's mother was hospitalised soon after with stress related asthmatic problems.

Had it not been for personal connections, the Baigrie family wouldn't have gone to NCCL for help. Nor, had they ever found a suitable solicitor, would they have been able to afford the cost of representation at the inquest. There is no legal aid for coroners' courts. Acting as solicitors, the NCCL reckon to have done about £800 worth of work so far.

On top of this are fees for an independent pathologist's report and ballistics advice — in this case paid for by Inquest, the deaths in custody organisation — and barrister's fees. NCCL describes the cost of preparation of the Baigrie case as 'equivalent to a major Crown Court case.' ●

Melissa Benn and Ken Worpole's study of deaths and the police in London, *Death in the City*, comes out in the autumn.

Climax nears in Newham row over director of education

A LONG-RUNNING dispute between the controlling Labour group in the London borough of Newham and local director of education James Pailing is set to climax next Monday 29 April at the Labour councillors' AGM. He enfuriated Labour councillors last year by attempting to deduct salary from NUT members involved in an unofficial industrial action.

If he's induced to go, the repercussions within local government nationally could be as great as deselection of sitting Labour MP Reg Prentice by Newham Labour was for the Labour Party a decade ago. On Monday a left-winger, Peter Pendle, is expected to challenge the present right-wing deputy chair of the education committee for the vacant chair; and another left-winger, Conor McAuley, is expected to challenge Newham leader Jack Hart.

Victory for Pendle and McAuley would lead to swift moves to get rid of Pailing, accused by his critics of being out of touch with the needs of parents and pupils in one of the country's poorest local authorities.

First steps to remove him as director were taken last November when the Labour group passed a motion of no-confidence in him. In January a full council meeting voted to ask for his resignation. Negotiations have taken place between Pailing's lawyer, his 'union' (the association of education officers), and the council. He has turned down a £30,000 'golden handshake' and is understood to be holding out for a sum in the region of £85,000

Besides the teachers' salaries row Pailing was involved last year in a bitter row with teachers wanting to hold meetings in support of striking miners in school halls. On one occasion a headteacher, apparently with the director's support, locked his school gates in order to prevent such a meeting taking place. He has advocated school closures contrary to Labour's policy of keeping all schools open.

Support for Pailing comes from the SDP/Liberal opposition on the council (there are no Tories) and from some Labour right-wingers.

Barry Hugill

Tory arm-lock on Brighton is broken at last

FOR the first time in living memory, the Conservatives no longer have the greatest number of seats on Brighton Council. Last week Labour gained Regency ward from the Tories; the political complexion of the borough council is now: Conservative 22, Labour 22, Alliance 4.

Regency ward covers territory familiar to Brighton conference-goers: it stretches along the sea front from the centre of Brighton to Hove. It used to be safe Conservative territory; but in the 1983 local elections (one month before the general election), the Alliance was just 208 votes behind the Tories. Labour, with 20 per cent, lagged a poor third.

Last May Labour regained second place in a closely fought contest. The result then: Conservative 1,021 (35 per cent), Labour 961 (33 per cent), Liberal 895 (30 per cent), Ecology Party 58 (2 per cent).

Labour's candidate, Andy Winter, continued to nurse the ward, and when one of the sitting Tory councillors resigned his seat to emigrate to South Africa (which says something about the sentiments of Brighton's Tories), fought last week's by-election. The Liberal vote collapsed, with Labour the main beneficiaries. The result: Labour 1,146 (43 per cent), Conservative 1,091 (41 per cent), Liberal 398 (15 per cent).

The importance of the defeat to the Tories can be gauged by the fact that substantial resources, including a computer, were sent to Brighton last week by Conservative Central Office in an effort to mobilise the local Tory vote.

Their efforts were in vain. But the most significant aspect of the result is the demonstration that where Labour retrieves its position as the main anti-Conservative challenger, and works hard at winning, it is able to squeeze the Alliance vote sufficiently to take seats *even when the Tory vote rises.*

Peter Kellner

Raw politics

JUST FANCY — after holding up a GLC section 137 grant to the new London Lesbian & Gay Centre under its own section 7 powers for over a month on the grounds that 'more information is required' (*NS* 5 April from the DoE horse's mouth), the DoE now says it *isn't* waiting for any extra information. Meanwhile (*NS* 12 April) staff remain in a limbo of legal redundancy, as since 31 March. In short: only a political verdict waits. ●

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Tutu aide praises unique anti-apartheid strike

AT BISHOP TUTU's request, Dan Vaughan, assistant general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, was in Dublin last Friday 19 April trying to resolve the Dunnes stores strike. It will soon be a year (19 July) since 13 of the stores group's workers struck in support of Mary Manning, suspended for refusing to handle South African goods.

Vaughan described the strike as 'of major interest to opponents of apartheid' in South Africa — many blacks, he said, were cynical about the fine sounding sentiments of solidarity and moral indignation displayed by Western governments. The knowledge that young people in Ireland had been prepared to jeopardise their employment and wages for the sake of a principle was 'a welcome gesture of solidarity'.

He tried nonetheless, as asked by Tutu, to mediate between the protestors and the Dunnes management. He met with the manager of the branch, but got no concession on the conditions the stores group is laying down before there can be a return to work: employees must be prepared to handle all produce sold.

Elusive owner

Requests both by himself and by the Nigerian ambassador to Ireland for a

Paul Mattson

Last year Bishop Tutu himself met with representatives of the Dunnes anti-apartheid strikers, while visiting London in the wake of his Nobel peace prize.

meeting with stores group chief Ben Dunne were, he claims, turned away. In a further attempt at a settlement Vaughan talked with leading politicians, and specifically asked that Ruari Quinn, minister for labour, appoint a mediator.

Answering criticisms that actual boycotts of South African goods may harm black workers Vaughan replied that 'money received from trade with the West rarely finds its way into the pockets of those most in need'. It's black South Africans themselves, he said, who have asked for economic sanctions, 'perceiving that if apartheid is to be changed in a peaceful manner it will only come about through pressure from the international community'.

The striking Dunnes workers believe they haven't had anything like the support from other trades unionists in Ireland that they might have expected: 'We're carrying out a resolution passed at our annual general meeting' (Irish Distributive & Administrative Trade Union, at spring 1984 agm) 'and expected more backing than we've had'. It's feared the strike may shortly collapse as a result.

Chris McIvor and Terry O'Halloran

ILEA censures teacher for union activity

LABOUR-controlled ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) has disciplined a teacher for taking part in trade union activities.

Viv Newby is appealing against the permanent reprimand on her record, which would make it extremely difficult for her to get future jobs. The reprimand is a result of her representing George Orwell NUT in four demonstrations in a two year period. Other teachers have received disciplinary letters but Newby — who served as a co-shop steward — is the first to be so seriously censured.

'It is to be deplored that you have no regard for the consequences of your actions upon the pupils', says the reprimand. Yet Newby says that at the first demonstration, in support of the health workers in October 1982, the union mandated her to represent them and provided teaching cover for her class.

The other actions — two in June 1983 against redeployment of 14 members of the school's teaching staff and one in June 1984 in support of the miners — were supported by George Orwell's NUT and so the school was closed.

George Orwell NUT is calling for a demonstration on the day of her tribunal, 13 May, outside County Hall. The appeal will be heard by a QC; Newby is allowed to have a 'friend' with her.

Jane Dibblin

MISCELLANY

New enemy within

Any hack who gets a chance to put a question to the PoW while he's still raving about the beauties of Italy should put this one: 'Do you know that Thatcher is lobbying to get developer Peter Palumbo's glass tower (designer, Mies van der Rohe) put up next to the Mansion House? You, sir, called the idea 'a glass stump' in your RIBA speech of last May.' Mrs Thatcher is telling anyone in earshot that 'conservation has gone too far', and is understood to be pushing for the project in Cabinet despite the hostility of last summer's planning enquiry. Look out for a major row between the Prinny lobby, victorious in Trafalgar Square, and Thatcherite notions of 'progress'.

You amaze me

'Just reading the names', mused the *Sunday Times* last weekend, 'reminds one of those deceptively cosy days when the ex-prime ministerial trio, who now lead their old Whitehall warriors into battle, presided over what came close to being a corporate state'. And, 'we are not impressed by consensus-minded efforts, however well-intended, which carry unaffordable risks and probable failure'. The subject of course was the Charter for Jobs. Among the trustees listed under the derided ex-prime ministerial trio is the name of David Lipsey. Economics editor of the *Sunday Times.*

'Them-too' generation

But even as Sunday Times *editor Andrew Neil drags his miserable readers towards the New Conservatism it's cracking back in America. Those reputedly apathetic US students are rediscovering altruism. Seven Columbia students have just kept up a two-week fast (two to the point of hospitalisation) to protest against the university's $34 million investments in companies doing business in South Africa. More than 100 others have sat in on the steps of one of the buildings (chaining the door), supported by students from other NY universities, some Columbia faculty members, and even Pete Seeger, '60s singer. Several thousand turned out at Harvard to mark the anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination. Stephanie Urdang, of American Committee on Africa, says 'the students haven't been so active since Vietnam, not even about Central American'. Cop that, sunrise worshippers. Enter the 'Gutsies' (Genuinely Upset Teachers & Students).*

Be-bop-a-pocalypse

Bop-shu-wadda-baba. So you thought High Energy dead? Nope. The pop bible of the in-crowd, *BNFL News*, shu-waddy-waddy, is hyping the ULTRA Hi Energy pressing 'Windscale', & is goin' to have all you rhumbaing Cumbrians pell-melling in the fells. *Our interpreter writes*: three blokes who work at Sellafield nuclear complex in Cumbria belong to a new five-bloke pop group called *Voice* which has written and recorded what is believed to be the first (and hoped to be the last) pro-nuclear

song. It's called 'Your tiny hand is burning'. No it isn't. But it does end with the inspiring words 'When the lights go out, *don't blame us*'. Windscale worker and ivory-tinkler Graeme Hogg claims 'Strangers come up to us in the street and offer congratulations, and say we're doing a good job'. They probably think he's Bob Geldof.

Special relationships

As the White House has been learning this past fortnight, those who don't remember what fascism was, are likely to re-enact it. President Reagan's silver-screen fantasy of what the Waffen SS did during World War II was fresh in the minds of the audience at the opening session of a conference organised this week in Washington by the League of Arab States. The topic was Israeli rule in the occupied Arab territories. Sean MacBride opened the proceedings with the remark that the victimization of the Arabs of Palestine and Lebanon was only the most recent example of a fascist mentality that had decimated the blacks of South Africa, the Jews of Europe, and the Irish. His list of examples might have gone unremarked in the predominantly American and Arab audience, except for the keen observers from the British and West German embassies. Alan Goulty has been her Britannic Majesty's Middle East expert in Washington for several years, and Bernhard von der Planitz a fresh arrival at the West German Chancery from a posting in Israel. Goulty turned to von der Planitz. That remark of MacBride's about the Irish, he said: 'Quite disgraceful.' His German ally nodded and said: 'Yes, quite disgraceful.'

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'UK TO BLAME' FOR DUTCH PRISON FAST

ALAN REEVE, who gave up his hunger strike in a Dutch jail this week after 54 days, is convinced that because of his political views the British government was putting pressure on the Dutch authorities to allow him to die, according to his wife and friends in Amsterdam. JOLYON JENKINS reports

AN ESCAPED Broadmoor inmate, Reeve was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in 1982 in Holland for the manslaughter of a Dutch policeman while resisting arrest for shoplifting. He'd been on the run from the UK for a year — and had stolen from an off-licence in order to celebrate.

At the time of his escape in 1981, Reeve had spent 17 years in Broadmoor. He'd been sentenced to indefinite detention at the age of 15 after being convicted of the manslaughter of a fellow schoolboy. Shortly after Reeve's escape, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that restricted mental patients should be given the right to appeal for release to a tribunal or court.

'Highly articulate'

Reeve would almost certainly have succeeded at such a tribunal. A *Times* correspondent interviewed him a year before he escaped and found him gentle and highly articulate.

He always claimed it was his political views that were held against him. He became increasingly attracted to Marxism and Maoism after he took an Open University degree in politics.

He organised political discussions among inmates on Broadmoor's sports fields and founded the Revolutionary Action Committee of Broadmoor, which in 1972 held a roof-top protest against prison conditions. He wrote a book, *Notes from a Waiting Room* (Heretic), in which he developed a radical critique of the British penal system.

In prison in Holland he continued his political activity and became chairman of the prisoners' committee. In all other respects he was a model prisoner: on one occasion he was formally thanked by the prison board for handing in a gun that had been circulating in the prison.

Reeve started his hunger strike after he was put in indefinite solitary isolation in the 'bunker' — the harshest regime in the Dutch penal system — following an unsuccessful escape attempt. The move was an internal disciplinary measure, as non-violent escape isn't an offence under Dutch law.

Did Britain meddle?

But the punishment was unprecedented in its severity. Reeve says that he was told by the assistant governor that the move was made at the request of the British Ambassador, via the chief officer of the Ministry of Justice in Amsterdam.

Whatever the truth of the claim, Reeve is an embarrassment to the British government. He's due, if he survives the fast, to be deported at the end of his sentence and will then present the Home Office with a dilemma: his record means that they can hardly release him, but in Broadmoor he will continue to be politically subversive.

Reeve started eating again after the Dutch Justice Ministry promised to move him out of the bunker in August. It's not certain that he will live. His friends say that he is being denied access to his own doctor and is being fed on solids, which are inappropriate after such a long fast.●

PA

Remember the picture? — Reeve being recaptured in Holland

TOES holds second meet

THE OTHER Economic Summit (TOES) — the Green movement's answer to next month's 'official' Bonn summit — was held in London last week, and demonstrated the importance of many of the Green movement's ideas and objectives to the development of socialist economic strategy.

This year's TOES — the second of its kind — attracted 500 Greens from Britain, Europe, America and, importantly, the Third World, and will be sending delegates to Bonn to submit alternative proposals.

The subjects covered this year were agriculture, trade and health. Treatments were diverse, linked only by a common search for Green alternatives to current practices, and included an assessment of the viability of organic farming in Britain, an account of the IMF's role in world poverty and a critique of the way business and the medical profession have hijacked alternative health practices such as holistic medicine.

Few socialists would quarrel with TOES' immediate proposals: redistribution of world food stocks; the promotion of a more efficient, self-reliant and just world food production system; alleviation of Third World debt; job creation and sharing; and the regeneration of local economies.

Failures of analysis

But TOES' longer term goal, the development of 'The New Economics', seemed more problematic and some speakers' contributions were confused. There were frequent references to 'paradigm shifts' appropriate to 'post industrial society'.

Participants didn't always differentiate between criticisms of the present economic *system* and criticisms of the current *theory* — and the latter sometimes got blamed for the former. But without an understanding of why the present system has harmful effects a prescription for change is impossible.

Significantly, there was no mention of the words 'capitalism' or 'class' and almost none of 'ownership'. Speakers derided as 'sterile' debate on crucial issues that demand an explicitly left or right wing stance. But from a socialist viewpoint, to ignore the structure and mechanics of capitalism leaves Green or 'new' economics with almost no analytical foundation.

However, it's arguable that this very incoherence in green economics makes TOES important for socialists. Much of its criticism of conventional (neoclassical, Keynsian and Marxist) theory is valid and essential to a socialist analysis of the failings of capitalism.

For example, the description of environmental and social costs of production as 'externalities' which aren't taken into account is crazy. As is the use of GNP, which takes into account nuclear arms and valium production but ignores housework, as a measure of our wealth and success.

Michael Jacobs

New tactic to veil over immigration procedures?

A SERIOUS new departure in immigration policing methods, allegedly involving people being persuaded to leave the country 'voluntarily', appears to have been disclosed by tactics used in a raid this month on a factory in London's Hackney.

Local council leaders and MPs and Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign (HADC) have already strongly criticised the operation, on 2 April, in which 'between 20 and 30' police and immigration officers descended on the Directmate clothing factory in Richmond Rd ostensibly to arrest two named people who weren't in fact there.

A number of other people, mainly Turkish Cypriots, were taken away. Police say that six people were involved. But according to other workers at the factory it was at least ten.

One of the six who are accounted for says he was questioned about his political affiliations. Another was taken away by the immigration officers — he's thought to have been removed to Cyprus. But there's most concern over four other people who weren't at the factory when it re-opened two weeks later and haven't been seen since the raid.

According to HADC, they left the country 'voluntarily' under pressure from the police. If it's true then the tactic is a serious development in immigration policing methods. As the law stands an immigrant who admits to lying when he entered the country counts as an illegal immigrant and can be summarily removed with no appeal possible.

Given the choice between a confession followed by quick removal, or prosecution followed by deportation (perhaps being locked up in the meantime), many immigrants understandably choose the former. Nationals of some countries are keen to get outside police stations as soon as possible. If immigrants are now being offered 'voluntary' departure with no awkward paperwork, then scrutiny of police and immigration service behaviour will become almost impossible.

Brian Sedgemoor and Ernie Roberts, MPs for Hackney, are taking the allegations very seriously and are writing to immigration minister David Waddington to ask for a full explanation of the events of 2 April.

Jolyon Jenkins

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PETER KELLNER

What Moss Evans should say to David Owen

NO FUTURE ACCOUNT of the Labour movement in the 1980s will be complete without at least a passing mention of John Freeman. He is secretary of the transport workers' region 11 — Ireland. His region has provided some of the most worrying indications of vote-rigging in last year's election for a new general secretary to succeed Moss Evans. But it is not the first time that Freeman's domain has played a questionable role in Labour's politics.

Four years ago, when Tony Benn challenged Denis Healey for Labour's deputy leadership, the TGWU vote was critical. Together the unions wield 40 per cent of the vote in the party's electoral college. The TGWU, with one fifth of the trade union block, controls 8 per cent of the total college vote — equivalent in 1981 to 67 MPs, or 160 constituency parties.

As the Benn-Healey contest reached its climax, it became clear that the TGWU vote could well be decisive. A few days before the conference, Alex Kitson, the TGWU's deputy general secretary, called a press conference at Transport House to tell us where the union stood. He told us that its consultation had found a majority for Healey; but the executive had some doubts about the validity of the exercise and decided to back Benn instead. (That act, of course, gives the lie to the suggestion that the union blindly follows the declared wishes of its members, however ropey that declaration might be.)

The final decision, however, was left to the TGWU's delegation to the Labour Party conference. On the first ballot, the delegation voted for John Silkin. When he was eliminated, the delegation met at the Old Ship Hotel to decide what to do in the run-off. They divided 17 for Benn — and 17 for abstaining. It took a second vote back in the conference hall to break the deadlock in Benn's favour.

Had Benn won the contest as narrowly as he in fact lost it (by less than one per cent of the electoral college), he would have had John Freeman to thank. Two of Benn's 17 votes in the TGWU delegation came from the union's Irish delegates. Neither had been mandated by the union's Irish members to support Benn: Freeman had decided not to hold any consultation on the grounds that the political levy collected in Ireland did not go to the Labour Party.

This fact, however, did not stop the delegates favouring Freeman's preferred candidate for the deputy leadership. Had they not taken part in the Old Ship Hotel vote, Benn would have been beaten by a clear 12 point margin. Such is the leverage of a tiny group in a close contest fought with block votes.

The Irish influence on last year's TGWU general secretary election was no less important. On a turnout apparently higher than anywhere else in the British Isles, it reported a 32,000 majority for Ron Todd over George Wright — a margin beaten only by the much larger London and South East Region which declared a majority of 57,000 for Todd. Given that overall Todd's national winning margin was only 45,000, it is clear that the allegations of vote-rigging in Ireland, combined with doubts over the count in London, throw the overall result into dispute.

It is also clear why BBC2's *Newsnight* poll of 726 TGWU members at three Ulster branches caused so much consternation. Unpublished branch returns show that the 'official' turnout at the three branches surveyed was almost 80 per cent; yet Ulster Marketing Services, an experienced local polling organisation which conducted *Newsnight*'s fieldwork, found that only 32 per cent said they had voted.

(One explanation for Todd's Irish triumph has been offered by his supporters: that he has family ties with Waterford, in the southeast of the Irish Republic. This may indeed explain many things — but not the high turnout officially reported for the Belfast shipyard of Harland and Wolff, notorious for the Orange bias of its workforce. If Todd's Waterford connection were known there, it could only have helped Wright.)

MOSS EVANS's reply to the allegations — about Ireland and elsewhere — is that they have been exploited by the media and by right-wing politicians from Tom King to David Owen.

He is right. Labour's opponents in Fleet Street and Westminster love nothing more (with the possible exception of a row about a princess's Nazi father) than an opportunity to bash the Left for being undemocratic. Furthermore, there is something peculiarly unpleasant about being pilloried by editors who would run a mile from being elected by their staff, by Tory politicians whose basic conception of democracy is the freedom to maximise profits at the expense of low-paid workers, or by David Owen who, on the one occasion when he put his claim to lead the SDP to the party's membership, lost to Roy Jenkins. (Owen's elevation to the leadership of the SDP was uncontested, rather like Mr Gorbachev's elevation to the leadership of the Soviet communist party.)

While such arguments provide useful debating points, they do not address the heart of the issue. Democracy is not essential to the Right's purpose in life; it is essential to the Left's. If there is a single defining idea that distinguishes Left from Right in politics it is that the Left wishes (or should wish) to spread power, choice and wealth, whereas the Right seeks to constrict them.

To charge the Right with hypocrisy over the TGWU ballot row does not absolve the union from doing things properly; it provides a potent reason for being more democratic, being *seen* to be more democratic, and being proud of the fact. Moss Evans's reply to his critics ought not to be 'you're worse than us', but 'we're a damn sight better than you, and we're jolly well going to prove it'.

In any case, while the union's opponents have *exploited* the allegations, they have not *invented* them. Not even the *Daily Mail* could have generated so much smoke without at least a small fire to piss on. And the coverage of the row on *Newsnight* and Channel Four's *Union World* has been handled by people who are broadly sympathetic to (and, in Vincent Hanna's case, active in) trade unions.

THE DAMAGE, then, has been done mainly by the union itself, not by malicious outsiders. And the bulk of the damage, I believe, stems not so much from the original allegations themselves as from Moss Evans's reaction to them. Whatever his intentions — and he has an unfortunate ability to wrap the most benign action in bitter and defensive words when confronted by a microphone — he has until the last few days looked like a man trying to dismiss the allegations rather than to secure a thorough and independent investigation.

His most implausible statement has been that he has no access to individual branch returns. Yet, on the forms submitted by each region to the party's head office, figures for the numbers of eligible members — and of votes cast — are recorded. (Regions vary in whether they also list the numbers of votes each candidate obtained in each branch.)

Had Moss Evans believed that only minor, isolated instances of irregularity occurred and that these could not have overturned Todd's victory, his simplest course would have been to publish the turnout figures for each branch. Any branches with a substantially higher than average turnout would immediately have been identified and it would have been a simple matter to check whether this was the product of enthusiasm and good organisation — or the result of ballot-rigging.

It is probably too late now to settle the matter that way. The union's executive council meets after this issue of the *NS* goes to press to decide what to do. For the union's sake the best outcome would be for a new election to be called — and for George Wright to announce that he is leaving Todd with a free run. David Owen, for one, could scarcely complain about that. □

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WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO KE007

New evidence about the 1983 shooting down of the jumbo jet disproves all the theories that the airliner's course into sensitive Soviet airspace could have been inadvertent navigational error. The crew must have known they were off track, reports Duncan Campbell. *Research by Patrick Forbes*

ON 1 SEPTEMBER 1983 Korean Air Lines flight KE007 was shot down over the Sea of Japan with the loss of 269 lives. President Reagan tried to call the event the 'Korean Air Line Massacre'.

Initially, the central question (framed by the United States) was what level in the Soviet administration was to blame for such an unspeakable act. There was, said Reagan after the episode, 'no doubt' that the Soviets knew they were shooting down a civil airliner.

Since 1983, however, the terms of the debate have radically shifted. Billion-dollar lawsuits, expected to last at least another six years, are under way in New York, against both KAL and the US government. Two new books have just been published in the United States, and a third is due soon, all of which either refuse to dismiss, or actively endorse the claim that US intelligence activities helped create the tragedy.

Other reconstructions, notably extensive articles in the *Sunday Times* on 22 and 27 May last year and in the current (25 April) issue of the *New York Review of Books* by the Tokyo-based journalist Murray Sayle, have sought to exculpate the crew of the Korean Boeing 747 jumbo jet (and by implication, US intelligence agencies) of deliberately flying into Soviet airspace. Murray Sayle has claimed to 'reveal what really happened', 'proving' how an accidental navigational error occurred.

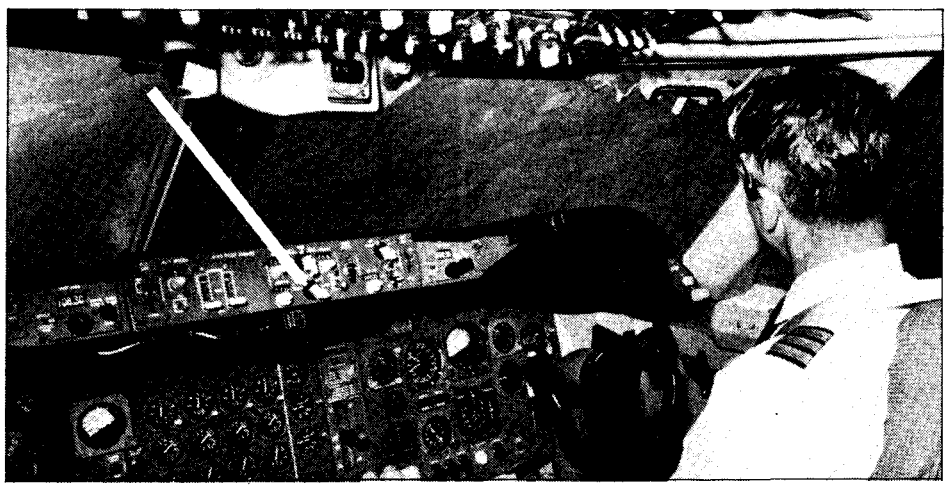
New data and analysis provided to the *New Statesman* from military sources and analysts in Japan, the UK and Sweden show, however, that these claims cannot be true. The data reveals:

- that the KAL pilots could not have made a single, simple navigational error;
- that the airliner was only brought down after a disastrous performance by the Soviet air defence system;
- that there *was* an American electronic intelligence satellite in range on the two occasions that the KAL jumbo jet crossed into Soviet territory, as the Soviet Union has alleged.

In his recently published book on the KAL disaster, Stanford University Professor Alexander Dallin carefully balances the political responses to and suggested technical explanations for the incident and concludes that:

> It must be acknowledged that with the passage of time [the argument that the whole thing was engineered by the United States] unlike all others, looms stronger than before.

THE FIVE HOUR flight of KE007 (the jet's actual flight number) began in Anchorage, Alaska, at 3am local time on 31 August 1983. Crossing the International Date Line in the dark it first passed over the Soviet Kamchatka peninsula and then entered Soviet airspace for a second time over Sakhalin Island just after 1815 hours GMT on 1 September. About 10 minutes later, a Soviet Su-15 interceptor launched two missiles at the jet, as it was leaving Sakhalin Island. The 747 was then at an altitude of 33,000 feet — about six miles — and is believed to have dived into the sea, out of control.



Widely publicised theories of innocent mal-navigation depend entirely on both crew failing to notice the wrong position of a switch directly in front of them, and its consequent effects for more than 5 hours

When it left Alaska, KE007 appears to have flown increasingly to the north of its assigned path — international air route Red 20, the northernmost of five air corridors between Alaska and northeast Asia. As it crossed the Alaska coast, it was already about 12 miles off course; by the time it reached Sakhalin it was almost 400 miles north of where it was scheduled to pass on the Red 20 air corridor.

It is not possible, in the absence of the 'black box, flight recorder or any survivors, to say what the Korean crew thought they were doing. But it is now possible to say that the pilots knew that they were not on their proper course. We now know that when over the Sea of Okhotsk, after leaving the Kamchatka peninsula and before crossing over Sakhalin, the aircraft made first a turn to the right and then to the left in an S-bend (see diagram). These changes of course, of which the pilots could not have been unaware, took the plane directly over Sakhalin, instead of continuing what the USSR would assume was a course into Japanese airspace.

Although KE007 had by then established direct contact with Japanese air traffic control, the pilot made no attempt to report his changes of course as is routinely required by international air safety rules.

The data needed to prove that KE007 was misleading air traffic control was, ironically, first published on the day of the shoot-down itself, in the evening edition of the Tokyo newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*. This was the radar track of the doomed aircraft as it crossed Sakhalin Island, when it had been picked up by the Japanese Self Defence Forces radar station at Wakkanai at the extreme northern tip of Japan. A few days later, on 12 September, the same plot was published, without comment, in the prestigious US journal, *Aviation Week*.

This radar plot has since been made available to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and others by the Japanese Self Defence Agency. Wakkanai radar operators first tracked the plane (not knowing it to be a western civil airliner) from a position at 47° 40' N 143° 45' E, when it was travelling on a course of about 260 magnetic degrees (ie just south of due west). During the 17 minutes or so that it was tracked, this heading changed continuously to the left, by about 20 degrees. As the Soviet interceptors closed on KE007, they reported its course as 240 degrees magnetic.

It is clear, however, that before coming into range of Wakkanai radar KE007 had altered course to the right. Courses from the Kamchatka peninsula to the point where KE007 appeared on Wakkanai radar are about 245 degrees. The aircraft had, therefore, already changed heading once (to the right) before being picked up by Wakkanai. These course changes must have been under the control of the crew themselves, yet they were giving at best an incomplete and at worst a false impression of their movements to air traffic controllers in Japan. Why this should have been the case must remain a matter of speculation.

KE007 established radio contact with Japan when it was crossing Kamchatka (at 1540 GMT). It then radioed that it was at 'Point Nippi' — a compulsory progress reporting point on the prescribed route Red 20. The real

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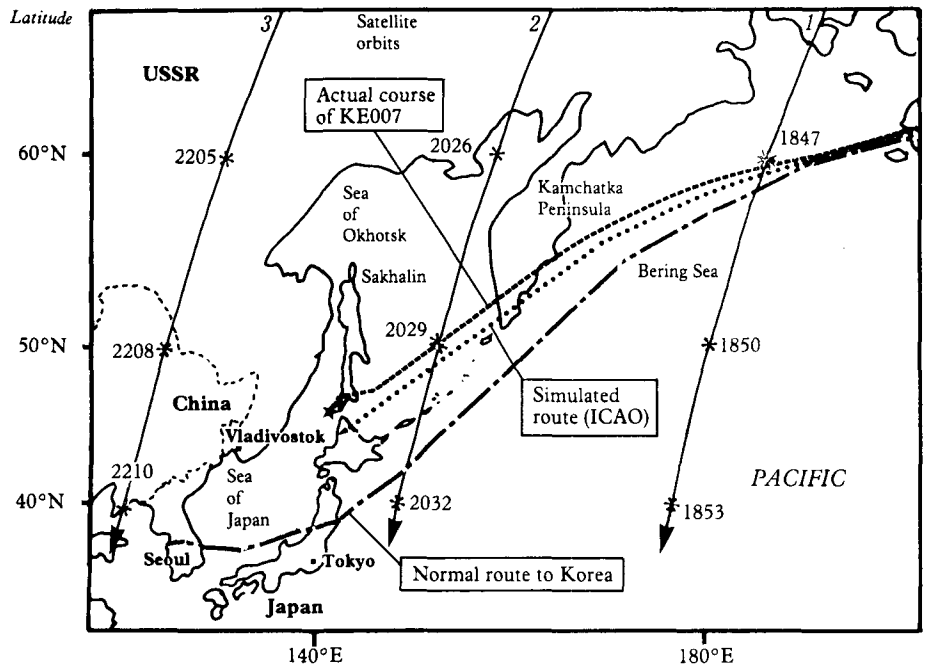


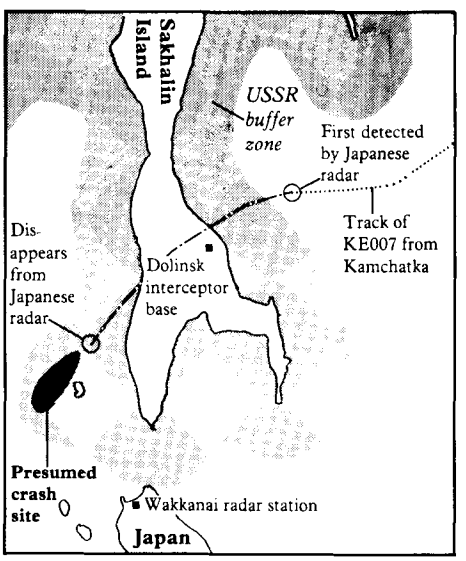
Point Nippi was then about 140 miles away. From the moment KE007 started to fly over Sakhalin to the moment when it was hit by missiles, the crew were in touch with Tokyo. They reported no equipment failures or any other difficulty. They certainly did not report making unauthorised changes of course.

Route Red 20 is almost completely straight (roughly a great circle route) for over 300 miles past the point they would have been at, if they had really passed 'Point Nippi' as reported.

SOON AFTER the incident, a range of theories were offered to explain KE007's wrong track. Most were based on the crew mis-setting or misreading their navigational aids. But a 747 passenger airliner carries two pilots and is equipped with a multitude of duplicated or triplicated navigation systems. The KAL 747 had 3 Inertial Navigation Systems (INS), 2 magnetic compasses, 2 weather and ground radar sets, 7 receivers for radio navigation beacons, 5 ordinary radio sets, and so on. It would not have been easy for an experienced flight crew to misinterpret or disregard every single indication of a navigational error from all this cockpit equipment.

ICAO evaluated three of the most persuasive theories of 'navigational error' and published its report in December 1983. A subsequent review by ICAO's Air Navigation Commission dismissed all of them as insufficient explanations: 'The Commission found it difficult to endorse the conclusions connected with the scenarios postulated. . .because any of them contained some points which could not be explained satisfactorily'.

Nevertheless, one of these ICAO-evaluated theories continues to be promoted (eg in the *New York Review of Books*). This theory is that instead of flying the aircraft on 'inertial navigation' system — which will pick the shortest route between any two set points on earth, KE007 was switched to an autopilot set to fly continuously on a fixed compass bearing. In 1983, the plane's manufacturers Boeing and equipment suppliers Litton Industries conducted a simulation of what would have happened if the aircraft had been flown, unnoticed, on a constant magnetic compass



Above: Flight KE007 should have been on international air route Red 20 (bottom). Instead, it veered up to 400 miles to the north (top). ICAO tested the mis-setting theory, and found that it didn't match the real path closely enough. Below: path of KE007 over Sakhalin Island, from Japanese radar tracking data.

course of 246 degrees. The simulation, at first, produces a plausible result (see diagram).

On a constant heading of 246 degrees from Alaska, the track indeed crosses the Kamchatka peninsula where KE007 did. But after that, the ICAO report comments, the predicted track passes '80 to 100 NM (nautical miles) south' of the actual track of KE007. Most importantly, this track does not cross Sakhalin, but would instead just graze Soviet airspace and continue on to northern Japan.

Nevertheless, maps published in the *Sunday Times* and in the *New York Review of Books* show a magnetic course track — marked as illustrating a 'constant magnetic heading 246 degrees' — as intersecting Sakhalin. The course for this reconstruction, which contradicts ICAO, is given as 'the British Civil Aviation Authority' (CAA). The CAA deny this responsibility. They have not published, and do not publish such material, a representative said this week.

Soon after the flight, one (now former) CAA expert provided data to BBC's *Newsnight* to talk about the constant magnetic heading theory. But his calculation then was a rapid estimate which inspired but did not agree with the later simulations carried out for ICAO. This discrepancy is not explained in Sayle's reports.

One attempt to explain this discrepancy suggests that, when over the Sea of Okhotsk, the pilots realised that they were not where they expected. Not wishing immediately to announce their error, they made first one change of course, then another, to discover where they were and to try to get back to their scheduled course.

Such explanations are conceivable, although it is still difficult to think of any remotely plausible explanation for the first change of course to the *right*. Particularly since the proper flight path took them near to sensitive Soviet areas, the KAL crew should have reported navigational problems at once. They were in touch throughout with Tokyo while crossing Sakhalin. They made a routine request for clearance to increase height, but made no mention of course changes. By omission, they were giving Tokyo the impression that they were still flying a straight course.

SOVIET RADAR plots after the incident showed an S bend in the aircraft's track as it approached and crossed Sakhalin. The first Soviet chartings heavily exaggerated these course changes, but more realistic data was later submitted by the USSR to ICAO. The Soviet Union also reported a curved track in KE007's earlier approach route to Kamchatka.

In the recent articles by Murray Sayle, an ICAO commentary is selectively used to try to explain these apparent curves as a radar 'slant effect'. If, say, an aircraft flies vertically over a radar station at a height of six miles, it will appear, electronically, to be six miles away *horizontally*. But the ICAO report points out that the curve shown on Japan's Wakkanai radar, when KE007 was at a range that varied from 140 to 80 miles, 'obviously. . .would not show such a distortion'. The curve in the jumbo jet's track is real.

Some commentators have suggested that the Korean flight path may indeed have been deliberate, but was intended merely to save fuel. A great circle route from Alaska to Korea, crossing the USSR, is shorter than the legal route. (This theory was indeed advanced early by Mr Sayle, this time in the *Spectator* in October 1983.) But such a hazardous manoeuvre would inevitably be detected and reported. It is also improbable that Korean pilots would deliberately risk the plane and passengers to save their employers a few thousand dollars.

ALTHOUGH KE007 spent two hours in the area of the Sea of Okhotsk — the Soviet backyard — it spent only about 30 minutes actually crossing Soviet territory. At a speed of about 500 knots, crossing Kamchatka would have taken 25-30 minutes. Crossing Sakhalin took less than 5 minutes, in both cases allowing interceptor aircraft (even when launched early) little time to climb to more than 30,000 feet and close on a fast moving target.

Over Kamchatka, the Soviet interceptors failed entirely to identify or intercept the

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airliner before it was out again into international air space, over the Sea of Okhotsk. Both US and Japanese intelligence agencies know roughly what went wrong with Soviet air defence over Kamchatka, although no data has officially been made public.

It was totally wrongfooted by KE007; by some accounts its interceptor pilots were half-drunk, slow to take off, while two out of three of its major long range radar stations were out of order. Soviet air controllers expected the unidentified intruding aircraft, as was usual, to turn left away from Soviet airspace towards Japan before crossing Sakhalin.

As the aircraft turned to overfly Sakhalin, however, Soviet fighters were again scrambled. They had about 15 minutes in which to intercept the intruder inside Soviet airspace. At the Wakkanai radar and intelligence base, the Japanese recorded both the radar plot and radio messages from Soviet pilots to the ground. These have been given to ICAO.

However, using classified and sensitive equipment, Japan and the US also recorded the signals *from* the Soviet ground controllers, providing a complete picture of Soviet interception activities.

This shows that, as the KE007 approached Sakhalin, Soviet ground controllers gave their fighters the wrong course to intercept the incoming aircraft. Some interceptors were then involved in a tail chase with KE007, which was high above them, travelling at 400-500 knots, with only a few minutes to close on and identify the target and signal it to land. If the aircraft did not comply with such an order, it would have to be shot down; but such an attack would be unlawful outside Soviet airspace.

The transcript of the air-to-ground messages provided to the United Nations by the US, after rectification of some omissions, indicates what happened next. The Soviet pilot was clearly puzzled by the lights being shown by the target aircraft (despite an assertion by the Soviet government that there were never any lights on), but there wasn't time to investigate fully. He reported firing bursts of tracer shells to alert the airliner to the fact that it was being intercepted; but the correlated radar plot indicates that the interceptor was then still both below and well behind KE007.

IN LATER PRESENTING an elaborate account of the KAL incident as an explicit US-directed electronic intelligence-gathering operation, Marshal Ogarkov of the Soviet Union displayed a large map showing the alleged simultaneous presence off the USSR of four surveillance aircraft. There was also, he claimed, a 'Ferret D' satellite passing overhead — its passes timed to coincide with the KAL incursions.

The credibility of the Soviet account appears enhanced by the fact that the United States at first contrived not to mention the presence near to KE007, at one stage, of an RC-135 spy plane. But neither the Soviet nor US governments have been willing to help independent specialists identify what satellite was being described, or assess whether it might have played a role. The designation 'Ferret D' is a Soviet one.

Identifying such satellites has been made particularly difficult recently. The United States used to publish, though NASA, daily lists of the orbits of space objects for specialist use. But in June 1983, two months before the KAL incident, the US removed from this list all data about their own military satellites.

However, an international expert in military activities in space, Dr Bhupendra Jasani of SIPRI (the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) has now fully analysed the pattern of US Elint satellite activities, and found that such a satellite was roughly in the positions that Marshal Ogarkov described. There is no evidence as to whether its presence was 'co-ordinated', or merely coincidental.

One Flint satellite, known by its international launch number 1982-41C, matches the Soviet timing of satellite passes. This satellite was launched on 11 May 1982 accompanying a US Air Force 'Big Bird' KH-9 photographic reconnaissance satellite, but was then placed in an independent circular orbit, at an altitude of about 440 miles. During the KAL incursion, it crossed the Sakhalin/Kamchatka area three times, roughly but not exactly, in the manner described by the Soviet Union. The times and ground tracks of the 1982-41C Elint satellite calculated by Jasani are shown in the diagram.

Curiously, the map presented by Marshal Ogarkov and later published in *Pravda*, makes a number of errors in showing the ground track. The errors, about the angle and spacing of successive orbits, are so elementary that they seem scarcely to be accidental. But they serve no particular purpose. There is no alternative intelligence satellite which could have been involved in the fashion described. Dr Jasani's analysis will be published in June in the *1985 SIPRI Yearbook.* □

LEVENE AFFAIR

MINDING THEIR OWN BUSINESS

Gordon Brown looks at the role of private sector managers drafted into the civil service

SUSPICIONS ABOUT the improper influence of big business in Mrs Thatcher's administration will continue to grow as long as the Prime Minister refuses to explain the details of Mr Peter Levene's appointment as Head of Defence Procurement at a total of £107,000 a year. Mr Levene was the chairperson of the weapons firm, United Scientific Holdings.

On the nation's payroll, Mr Levene ranks below only the Royal Family, and far above any other public servant. There is considerable interest in his appointment, yet, under maximum political pressure, only a minimum has been revealed. Unanswered questions include:

- Why Mr Levene was considered unsuitable for the necessary certificate of qualification from the Civil Service Commissioners
- Under what circumstances his appointment took place without it
- Whether Ministers connived in the setting up of a shell company whose sole purpose was to make Mr Peter Levene available for a civil service secondment
- How it is proposed to avoid an apparently inescapable conflict of interest between Mr Levene's corporate connexions and his public responsibilities.

Financial Times

Peter Levene: Yes, Minister, it's a fair profit

Mr Levene's appointment was illegal in that, as Mrs Thatcher admitted to Parliament, it broke the strict procedures governing such appointments. Some remarkable limitations have already had to put upon it, because, after a row and a ruling, he is to be debarred from direct dealings with his 11 former arms companies in the United Scientific Holdings group. Uniquely among civil servants he, as a Chief Accounting Officer, is fiscally responsible for transactions of which he is to have no official knowledge. These transactions include some of the biggest defence orders contemplated after Trident — the army's armoured personnel carrier for the '80s (for which his former company is tendering) and the army's new battle tank for the '90s (for which his company has already submitted designs).

During his first year in post, Mr Levene's procurement assistants are to be put in the invidious position of making the decisions about these contracts — and about the dispute between the Procurement Executive and Mr Levene's business associates, after Mr Levene supplied ex-Israel gun pods for use in Phantoms in the Falklands. The gun-pods had to be refurbished and the government is now trying to recover some of the £4m which Mr Levene charged for the equipment. If the government does not feel safe buying a second-hand gun pod from Mr Levene, can they seriously entrust such an arms dealer with the nation's £8 billion procurement budget? The armed forces may have some way to go before procurement is handed over to Milo Minderbinder — but the appointment of Mr Levene appears as a substantial first step in that direction.

Despite all this it is clear that, with her personal endorsement of Mr Levene, Mrs Thatcher is well on her way to creating her own-

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brand of committed civil servant. Novel rules governing the political affiliations of civil servants are now being introduced to weed out the politically unacceptable. Previous rules governing the propriety of business appointments to the civil service seem simply to have been buried without any announcement of their demise.

Mr Levene is no stranger to conflicts of interest. In 1984, while still in charge of his own arms companies, and benefiting from £25m in Ministry of Defence orders, Mr Levene acted as personal adviser to Mr Heseltine. During a six-month period, he chaired a review of defence procurement policy, conducted an investigation into supplies and spares for the armed forces and wrote a secret report proposing the privatisation of the Royal Dockyards. Perhaps, not surprisingly, that report recommended that defence manufacturers take over running the Docks.

More recently, he was under ministerial instructions to sound out more than 20 of his fellow defence manufacturers on possible £4 billion contracts to run the Royal Dockyards at Plymouth and Rosyth. Challenged in parliamentary questions, Mr Heseltine asserted that there was no conflict of interest.

THE PRIVATISATION of defence work has been a major theme of the Thatcher administration since 1979. The interests of national security have been subordinated to commercial gain as the Royal Ordnance Factories, the warship and military aircraft builders, and now the Royal Dockyards have been offered into private hands. Now with the illegal secondment to senior defence posts of Mr Levene and 11 others from private industry, what we are witnessing is the privatisation from within of the Ministry of Defence itself. And it's not just who gets to work inside the MoD. Between 1980 and 1984, 1,988 civil servants left the MoD to go and work in private companies which must have been delighted by their inside knowledge and contacts.

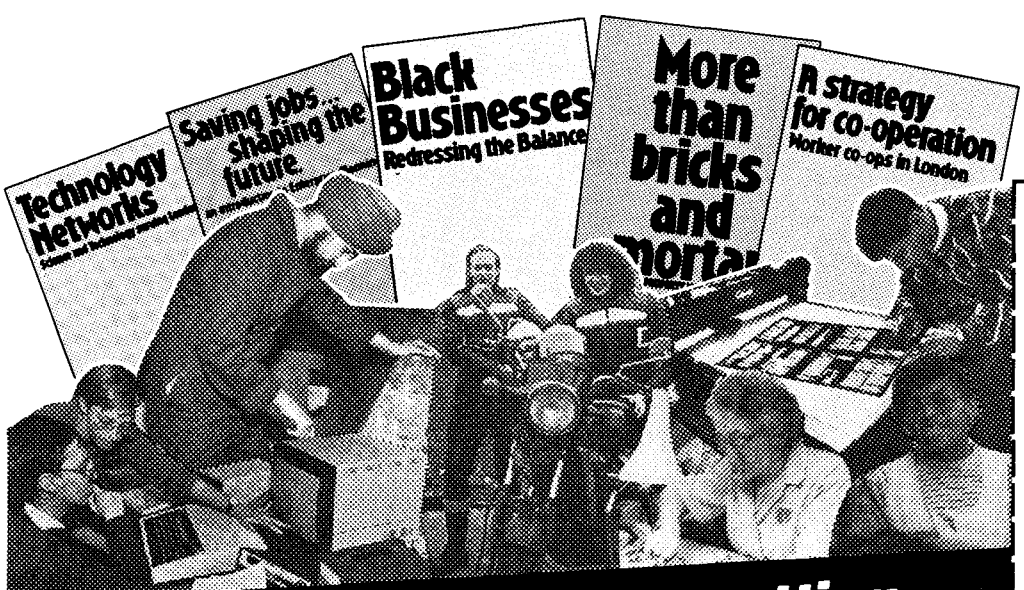
The Levene model is now being followed elsewhere — in the Cabinet Office and in other government departments, as new standards have emerged more in line with the Thatcherite times. In their key posts as advisers to Ministers, a number of directors of Britain's most influential companies have been designated temporary civil servants. But unlike ordinary civil servants, these men are free to retain directorships in firms with obvious interests in government contracts relating to their sphere of civil service responsibilities.

One such temporary civil servant is Mr Jeffrey Sterling, special adviser to Mr Tebbit at the Department of Trade and Industry. Mr Sterling is also chairperson of P and O Shipping and of Sterling Guarantee Trust, an industrial service company running warehousing distribution and servicing offshoots employing 10,000. In parliamentary answers Mr Tebbit confirmed that Mr Sterling is advising him on privatisation policy, and has access to commercial information regarded as confidential. There is no conflict of interest, says Mr Tebbit, because 'he is not involved in departmental matters which relate to companies in which he has an interest'. The discretionary grants to companies under Sections 7 and 8 of the 1982 Industrial Development Act are also made by accountants and bankers on secondment.

With 700 directorships and consultancies between them, the business interests of backbench Tory MPs are now well documented. So too are the Tory party contributions records of many companies who stand to benefit from government contracts and from privatisation sell-offs. But the influx of business managers with clear conflicts of interests both as officials and senior advisers takes big business to the heart of Whitehall.

The civil service 'ethos' of disinterested public advice, flawed and unaccountable as it has been, is being usurped by the private business ethos, which is wholly unaccountable, highly vulnerable to accusations of business pressure, and almost wholly lacking in any concept of the wider public good. Never, in peacetime, has the business community so penetrated the government, and never has government had so much to offer the business community. At a time of unprecedented disposal of national assets, can 'civil servants', who are still essentially business managers, really advise with the objectivity the public interest demands? And is it acceptable that those who are potential buyers in the sale of Great Britain Limited should also be allowed a preview, and the privilege of advising about the price of tickets? □

Gordon Brown is Labour MP for Dunfermline East.



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Camera Press

DIFFERENCE OF KIND

Last week, information about Princess Michael's father was a tabloid sensation. Here, Phillip Hall, who sold the information to the *Daily Mirror*, explains why he thinks it matters

'NO ONE is responsible for their parents.' Or you cannot visit the sins of the father on the child. These are the phrases which have recurred constantly in defence of Princess Michael. Even Eric Heffer has lent a little bit of left-wing credibility to them. The implication is that there is no need for us to be interested in what someone's father did before that someone was born. After all we should only be responsible for our own actions. As regards the general principle, there can be little disagreement. Let us hope that it takes root and is consistently applied in the case of royalty and artistocracy.

For in such circles it matters above all else who one's parents were. Pedigree is all. It is precisely the fact that Princess Michael is married to a Prince of the 'royal blood' which makes her in any sense remarkable — for many people, though not for all. Another peculiarity of royalty is that this fact of royal marriage is considered so overwhelmingly important that on entering this marriage, she lost her first name (Marie-Christine) as well as her surname!

The royals cannot have it both ways, though it seems their defenders are having a damned good try. If the defence for Princess Michael is that who one's parents were is not necessarily that important, then there is no justification for an hereditary monarchy or for any inherited titles. However, the position adopted in large sections of the media has come to be this. We are to support institutions based on heredity, especially the monarchy. But when the facts of heredity are embarrassing, as with Baron von Reibnitz, we shall democratically announce that it is quite irrelevant. There is thus a deft mental agility in moving from the feudal principles of heredity and title to the middle class meritocratic (and Republican) notion that each individual must stand on her own two feet, irrespective of the advantages or disadvantages of birth. This is doublethink, though I fully expect to read somewhere that it really proves the British genius for compromise, whereby we keep parts of our 'tradition' and graft onto it (very slowly, at a pace best dictated by *Times* leader writers) more modern notions.

Princess Michael herself, before her marriage, possessed one of these hereditary titles — simply because she was her father's daughter. She was Baroness von Reibnitz, a title of which she was very proud, even if her parents did divorce before she was two. Such baubles still carry social cachet in our society which remains impressed by aristocratic titles and accords them privileges which are nothing to do with individual worth. So much so that Mrs Thatcher has brought back hereditary peerages.

Royalty and artistocracy define their elevated status precisely in terms of their ancestry. Therefore it is highly relevant to point out that this ancestry contains some loathsome individuals.

Within the hereditary system of monarchy there is a strict pecking order and no question of promotion on 'merit'. Charles is a major royal. Princess Michael is a minor one. She has been castigated as 'pushy' precisely because she has behaved more grandly and prominently than her position in the royal hierarchy of birth warrants (her children are 'merely' 21st and 22nd in line of succession).

It is because of his heredity that Prince Michael could step from his many years in the Army into the boardrooms of Aitken Hume and Standard Telephones and Cables. The *Observer* describes him as a good 'introductions man', for Aitken Hume especially in the United States. Would Americans be especially interested in meeting this ex-Army officer and bringing their business to Aitken Hume but for his royal birth? It is because of this obsession with ancestry that Lord Mountbatten became an expert in genealogy and 300 years of Lady Diana Spencer's ancestors were printed in family trees before her marriage.

Without this special mystique royals would simply be known as ordinary people, which they undoubtedly are. The royals and their staff who deal with their public relations, of course, heavily collaborate in the mystique of superiority which the media accords them (tolerating the occasional salacious 'exposures' when they fall from grace as an inevitable part of that).

IT IS BECAUSE the royals *do* grant so much importance to heredity that the fact of Baron Gunther von Reibnitz's 11 years in the SS had to be softened for public consumption. Norman St John Stevas and the Princess assured us that he was 'only an honorary SS member' because they believed an important person is 'responsible' for his or her parents. The Princess's defence in her TV-am interview was not that heredity did not matter, but that she would 'learn to live with' the burden of guilt she had inherited. '*Only* an honorary member' (now demoted by royal spokespersons to 'nominal member') is anyway an interesting category, as though he had really nothing to do with an organisation that specialised in systematic mass murder.

Given the importance that is attributed to the royals' background, it is surprising that this fact of Princess Michael's inheritance has not come out before. Harold Brooks-Baker of Debrett's says he and other genealogists knew of von Reibnitz's SS past, and that the Palace were informed. A journalist who wrote a book on the Kents says she knew about the Baron. Was not someone who was German, who was known to be at least a Nazi Party member (from 1930), who left for racist Southern Africa after the war, the type of person to inspire further investigation by the Palace — or the Princess? Yet the article reprinted in practically all the daily papers, celebrating her recent 40th birthday, referred blithely to her 'aristocratic

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Austrian parents', when her father was German. Or according to a women's magazine last year — 'her noble parents were Baron Gunther von Reibnitz and his wife, a Hungarian countess.' No mention of his being German, or a Nazi.

Thus such articles have been assiduous in constructing a romantic past for this exotic royal. It seems that ordinary people are only to learn the nice parts, suitably glamorised to fit the mystique of a Princess. The public controversy which did take place over the marriage in 1978 largely concerned the problem of how to observe an antiquated 300-year-old law which stipulates that royals who marry Catholics lose their rights of succession to the throne.

This particular royal-Nazi connection is relevant for another reason. It is one of many. Edward VIII for instance is widely quoted by diarists of the 1930s as being sympathetic to Nazism long before his abdication in 1936. He visited Germany in 1937, and had talks with Hitler. His biographer, Frances Donaldson, believes that right up to the early part of the war he kept his options open about becoming a fascist King, should the Nazis successfully invade Britain.

King Leopold of Belgium had to abdicate after the war because of his collaboration with the Nazis during the German occupation. And the Italian King was content to stay on the throne with Mussolini in power. The British royal family knows well how many of their crowned cousins in Europe destroyed their hold on popular imagination and lose their thrones through their alliance with fascism. As the troubled celebrations of 1945 (a political victory over fascism or a nationalistic victory over Germany and Japan?) roll on, that happy accommodation with the far Right could again come into view. Up there on the pedestal the royals develop a lofty disdain for, and fear of, working poeple — witness some of the statements by Prince Philip. It is time the media subjected the claims of royalty to the level of political scrutiny which their great wealth and privileges demand. □

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CONSERVATION

A TAME REGARD FOR WILDLIFE

David Lovibond on the government's ditching of a landscape protection bill

THE GOVERNMENT'S bluff on countryside conservation has been called. When presented with an opportunity to demonstrate the reality of their declared commitment to Britain's wildlife and landscape heritage Ministers and Honourable Friends found much to admire in the Ministry of Agriculture and little need for reform. The government has egged its own face and undermined its already fragile credibility on 'Green' issues.

The occasion of this latest embarrassment is a Private Member's Bill amending the Wildlife and Countryside Act, moved by Labour's Dr David Clark. When Dr Clark published his Bill on 29 January, he had every reason to believe it would be supported by the government and assisted onto the Statute Book.

Against a background of increasing public interest in the environment and mounting political pressure from within its own party, the government had been making sympathetic noises about the need for further legislation to protect the countryside. It had become apparent that the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act was woefully inadequate and when in November 1983 Peter Hardy (Labour member for Wentworth) had introduced a Private Member's Bill to reform it he was told by William Waldegrave (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment) that the government was intending legislation of its own. With that assurance, Mr Hardy withdrew his Bill.

But in the Queen's Speech last November no mention was made of any forthcoming countryside legislation, raising again the need for a private Member's Bill. Mr Waldegrave told the Select Committee on the Environment that he would help a member with a Bill to close the loophole in the 1981 Act that related to notification of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). If an area of land is designated a SSSI, perhaps because it harbours a particular form of wildlife, the farmer must then leave it. The loophole is that three months warning is given of an impending notification, in which farmers have quickly ploughed up the land.

However the real show-stopper came when Sir Hugh Rossi, Chair of the Select Committee, told Mr Waldegrave that no member would take on such a Bill unless it also dealt with the wider issues of countryside protection.

Mr Waldegrave made it clear that any wider measures could only expect government support if they represented a consensus of opinion between all interested parties. Dr Clark scrupulously consulted the conservation bodies, the National Farmers' Union and the Country Landowners Association. He also paid particular attention to the Select Committee report of 30 January 1985, which strongly criticised the Ministry of Agriculture's (MAFF) record on conservation and emphasised the need for stronger conservation duties for Agriculture Ministers.

Clause 4 in Dr Clark's Bill reflected this concern; it would have required MAFF to encourage conservation, so far as this is consistent with its other statutory responsibilities. This clause had the backing of the NFU and the CLA as well as many back bench Tory MPs.

The Bill received an unopposed Second Reading on 8 February with enthusiastic support, particularly for clause 4, coming from all sides of the House. Tory MPs Kenneth Carlisle, Sir Nicholas Bonsor and Nicholas Soames gave the warmest welcome to the Bill and the heartiest congratulations to Dr Clark for introducing it.

BUT ALL WAS not what it seemed. The Committee stage of the Bill was supposed to be at the end of March, allowing time for lobbying members. But the Committee stage was brought forward to 6 March, with all its proceedings to be completed in a single day. In the course of the day the only clause to be accepted without amendment was the one relating to SSSIs. The vital clause 4 was deleted with none of its original Tory supporters voting in its favour. The clause on badger protection was amended in such a way as to render it useless, while the clause on Marine Nature Reserves was voted down and the remaining two clauses substantially altered.

There was no shortage of explanations for

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this remarkable change of heart. Mr Waldegrave considered the badger clause ambiguous and likely to offend the hunting fraternity. Strangest of all, clause 4 had to be deleted because it was illogical, unnecessary, and 'unconstitutional'! Mr Waldegrave thought it unfair that MAFF should be required to further conservation when that was what it was already doing.

Mr Waldegrave's is a minority view. Even the NFU and CLA now think that MAFF should do more to integrate conservation priorities into agricultural policies, as do the government's own watchdogs, the Countryside Commission and the Nature Conservancy Council. In fact the only body in opposition was the MAFF. The other Tory members of the Committee seem to have agreed to drop clause 4 in order to get through the consensus clause blocking the SSSI loophole.

MAFF is determined to cling to the narrow legislative framework which has caused so much of the friction between farmers and conservationists. It persists in seeing the conservation lobby as an enemy, despite the successful efforts to create an environmental consensus with farmers and landowners. And the government has decided to back MAFF: at a Cabinet Committee meeting held on 5 March and chaired by Lord Whitelaw the decision was taken to scuttle the main clauses of the Bill.

Dr Clark's Bill returns to the House for its Report Stage this Friday, 26 April. It is essential that a clause along the lines of clause 4 is reinstated; the longterm security of Britain's landscape heritage is dependent upon MAFF being obliged to take its responsibilities seriously. □

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FORWARD MARCH IN STEP

Frances Morrell looks at the state of the British Left and argues that a new strategy is bridging the traditional divide

REPORTING OF POLITICAL alignments in the Labour Party has recently had some of the zest of the sports pages. Important players have quarrelled bitterly with traditional managements and are now on the transfer list. Others are said to have scored own goals. Captain Kinnock's team has been greatly strengthened and may yet win the cup.

I want to argue that today's ritual combat, led by factions of the Parliamentary Party and the National Executive, no longer serves that function. We are being asked to choose between two strategies, both of which are out of date. On the one hand there are those who like Tony Benn support the fundamentalist analysis of the Labour Party, as developed in 1918 and brought to fruition in the Attlee government of 1945. On the other hand are those like Roy Hattersley who support the revisionist strategy developed in the early fifties, which culminated in the Wilson governments.

Almost unnoticed until very recently, a new strategy synthesising elements of the first two with wholly new perspectives is slowly and painfully evolving. Gradually the labour movement is assembling around its banners for Labour's forward march resumed.

The purpose of the new strategy is clear: it must provide for the social and economic survival of the people of Britain, for that is what is in jeopardy. Labour must unite in order to halt and reverse the Reaganisation of our economic life, the Americanisation of our culture, and to enable us to protect the Welfare State and modernise our collapsing manufacturing capability. To think through a new strategy and explain it without humbug to the electors, we need to shed the shrouds of nostalgia and parochialism that obscure our view of the real world.

The first great issue that the fundamentalists need to face is that Britain's economic position in the world, relative to the United States, has changed enormously since the Labour Party was founded. This necessitates some reconsideration of the Party's original isolationist political strategy.

For the Party's first strategy *was* essentially insular. Labour's plan was to build democratic socialism in one country. In 1918 that country, Britain, was the metropolitan centre of a world empire; it was perhaps legitimate to assume that Labour victory in a national Parliamentary contest would be decisive and unconstrained. The economy could be controlled through public ownership — and power and wealth redistributed. The need for alliances with democratic socialist forces elsewhere was scarcely relevant in a country which ruled so many others by right of conquest.

THE LIMITATIONS of that strategy began to emerge after 1945. The United States swept away the old imperial trading alliances and established a global market in which multi-national companies could trade freely across frontiers. Labour leaders feared that Britain was destined to become a third-rate European power in the American sphere of influence. They established a second, revisionist, political strategy. They rejected the European road to socialism by refusing to become involved in European economic co-operation. Instead, they hoped to preserve Britain's influence through a special relationship with the United States, Britain's defence through the NATO alliance, its economic independence and growth through the Commonwealth alliance. At home, equality and full employment was to be secured through Keynsian economics and support for the mixed economy.

When the British people, in 1975, voted to remain members of the European Economic Community, they in effect rejected the strategy of the special relationship and the Commonwealth alliance: this is no longer even an option. At the same time it was becoming obvious that equality and full employment at home could not be delivered through Keynesian economics, alone. The British government was losing control of large sections of the economy to multinational power. All that remained of Labour's post-war package was the huge nuclear defence bill that was the legacy of the special relationship and the price of our leading position in NATO. The revisionist strategy had failed. The 1975 referendum result presented a strategic crisis to the Party. The heirs of Bevan fell back to the Party's early isolationism: the heirs of Gaitskell (ironically himself an anti-marketeer), having successfully supported entry into the EEC, then continued as if nothing had changed.

From the day in 1951 when Bevan resigned over cuts made by Gaitskell in the Health Service to pay for a US-required defence programme, to the '74-79 Labour government that cut public services but maintained the nuclear programme, to the present £10 billion bill to re-equip Trident, a single truth has held. Our welfare state and public investment programmes have been consistently sacrificed, not because the country's economy could not afford them, but because it could not afford them *and* an extravagant defence policy.

The revisionists have continued to support high defence programmes and sacrifice welfare because they, like the fundamentalists, cannot in their hearts adjust to the fact that we are no longer a major power. Once one of the big four at Yalta, we are today just one European country among many. Paradoxically, those who supported entry into the EEC seem particularly incapable of recognising this.

Many people in the Party realise this: they are seeking a new strategy which is neither

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John Minnion

isolationist nor neo-imperialist. Such a strategy recognises our vulnerability to multinational capital and our European identity without yielding to the vision of a European super-state.

Such a strategy, which aims to establish a common European position on defence with a level of spending appropriate to a European country and some protection of our currency and economy through joint arrangements, would immediately make it possible to maintain and improve public spending on health, housing, education and pensions, and investment in jobs to restore local democracy. Of itself, it is not easy to achieve. However the effort to regain control of our own economy will be easier if each separate democratic socialist movement is seeking to do the same in power, or declaring its intention while in opposition. Of itself, it is not enough: but in the decade that will be necessary to undo the harm that Thatcherism has done, it would enable a Labour government to make a stable start.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST movements in Europe, however, are considerably more vigorous and successful than our own. If Labour's forward march is to be resumed, we must have a strategy for change and a style of presenting it which makes people want to enlist under our banner. So far, as with our approach to the economy, two strategies for the creation of an equal society have been put forward within the Party. They have often been presented as incompatible. That need not be so.

Tony Crosland defined socialism as the pursuit of equality and social justice. Tony Benn defined it as an irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families. Both spoke for authentic traditions within the Party. Crosland expressed the Fabian tradition in which, through detailed planning and redistributive taxation, public services were delivered. Benn spoke for the tradition in which the Labour Party supports those who engage in struggle themselves. Both important traditions are in jeopardy; both need to be re-articulated and corrected for their unconscious authoritarianism.

The Fabians, Beveridge, Attlee and Bevan left us the legacy of a collective funding system for the Welfare State. This involved tax revenue collected from private individuals and companies on a progressive basis to pay for services, which like health and education were free at the point of use, or, like council rents, were very cheap. This was a huge advance for working people. Mrs Thatcher's administration has looked with Fabian care at the system and reversed it. The fact that council rents in some areas actually subsidise rates is symbolic of an invisible, strategic shift which discriminates massively against the poorest. Labour needs to declare that it will reverse this.

But it is equally important to acknowledge that collective funding is not enough; collective planning by those who work in the services and those who use them — tenants, parents, patients — is just as essential. We cannot maintain the old-style paternalistic management which has given us the Gas Board and public housing that no one wants to live in. We do not aim to plan people's lives for them, but to provide the means whereby they can plan for themselves.

The emphasis that Tony Benn brought to bear was a vital corrective to the managerial socialism of Fabians. He recognised that socialist change comes out of the struggle — and in particular the organised industrial struggle — of working people themselves. On that issue Benn speaks for the Labour Party.

However, Benn's critique does not go far enough. Too many people in the Labour Party only understand one kind of struggle, that of organised industrial workers at the workplace. Not all union struggles are industrial; not all struggles are led by unions. The successful struggle of the Birmingham dinner-ladies against the Conservative council was an important union victory, but because it was not industrial it did not get the attention it deserved. The women who organised against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill, parents opposing cuts in school meal services, tenants demanding improved housing, the endless struggles of black people against the deportation rules — we have failed to understand that all these are Labour struggles. The lost heartlands of the South bear testimony to this failure.

The exaggerated attention given particularly by men on the left of the Labour Party to one form of struggle leads to an overemphasis on a particular style of Labour Party campaigning. We have for years assumed that filling a hall with people and a platform with histrionic male speakers is the best way of communicating with the public.

What managerial socialism and the socialism of struggle have in common is that both exclude large sections of the community from power and therefore fail. Both need to be made democratic, if the forward march is going to be a mass movement.

What it comes to is this: the labour movement needs to recognise the modesty of Britain's position in the world. Like other countries in a similar position, if we are to control our own destiny we need to make common cause with

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similar movements in neighbouring countries.

Bill Forsythe, the producer of films like *Gregory's Girl*, once said that British film makers needed to have the courage to be provincial. So does Labour. Let Mrs Thatcher tread the world stage while the economy collapses at home. Our role is to reintegrate with the people, express the aspirations they actually have, build a political force capable of defeating what she stands for and a European political force capable of containing multinational power. We can do it, if we know that is what we must do. □

Frances Morrell is Leader of the Inner London Education Authority.

A-BOMB

CLEM — THE COLD WAR DISSENTER

Raymond Smith and John Zametica look again at Attlee

MARGARET THATCHER and her Cabinet colleagues like to remind Labour leaders that decisions on the British atomic bomb and American bases originated during the life of the Attlee government. The message is clear: the Labour Party when in government between 1945 and 1951 did not flinch from taking a path which, though economically and financially onerous, was at the time deemed crucial to Britain's wider interests.

Clem Attlee and Ernie Bevin have long since become *bêtes noires* of the left wing of the Labour Party as a result of those decisions and their general attitude towards Britain's defence in the postwar world. Bevin had always sat comfortably on the right wing of the party; and as Foreign Secretary he discounted criticism and was moved to fits of great anger by what he regarded as the disloyalty of some members of his own backbench. But Attlee's background was rather different. Throughout the 1930s he had been developing ideas on foreign and defence policy which were radical and internationalist in their application. Yet it was assumed that contact with the government machine during the war purged Attlee's willingness to experiment in international affairs. And for those outside Whitehall, Attlee joined Bevin, though less ostentatiously, as a defender of Britain's traditional strategic and political interests against Soviet expansionism.

Times Newspapers

Jostling for power: Cunningham (first on left), Attlee (fourth on left), Alanbrooke (second from right) and Bevin (far right), grouped around the King (centre) in August 1945

Over the years there has been little change in this view of them as arch cold warriors. In Bevin's case, though he was perhaps more cautious than some have supposed, it remains substantially true. An examination of Attlee's role in the formulation of British defence policy in the first two years of his government, however, shows that the Prime Minister was in fact a dissenter from cold war orthodoxy. Attlee's internationalism had not disappeared during the war; and, as documents in the Public Record Office reveal, for almost two years he fought single handedly against the Chiefs of Staff and his Foreign Secretary to prevent the adoption of a defence strategy which he felt embraced the worst aspects of Britain's imperial tradition and which emphasized national rather than international plans to combat aggression.

For Attlee, even before he knew of the development of the atomic bomb (though even as Deputy Prime Minister in the wartime coalition he wasn't made privy to the secret), there were strong strategic as well as ideological reasons for altering the basis of British defence policy. As early as the Spring of 1945, while still a member of the coalition, he was displaying signs of departing from the presuppositions which had lain at the heart of British defence strategy both before and during the war. Later he used Churchill's invitation to attend the Potsdam Conference to launch a substantial attack on that policy. There was, he wrote to Churchill, 'a danger of our getting into a position where we and the Russians confront each other as rival great powers at a number of points of strategic importance . . . We ought to confront the Russians with the requirements of a world organisation for peace, not with the needs of the defence of the British Empire.'

Moreover, Attlee found it difficult to accept military planning which he felt was based on an obsolete conception of imperial defence derived from the naval era. Some idea of the defence establishment's hostility came from the First Sea Lord, Admiral Cunningham: 'Atlee (*sic*) has written what appears to be a damned silly letter to the P.M. saying we ought not oppose a great country like Russia having bases anywhere she wants them. What an ass!' Cunningham probably felt safe in his forthright views not simply because they were confided to his diary, but because he had little thought of Attlee being his next political boss.

FROM SEPTEMBER 1945 to March 1946 Attlee, now installed as Prime Minister with a majority of 146, consistently challenged both the nature and extent of Britain's external commitments. By January 1946 he was confident enough to assert in a Defence Committee meeting that 'there was no one to fight'. In particular Attlee was dismissive of arguments which stressed the importance of Britain's lines of communication through the Mediterranean and the Middle East, an attitude which prompted both Cunningham and Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to describe the Prime Minister's view as 'defeatist'.

The Chiefs of Staff, supported all along by Bevin but increasingly frustrated by Attlee's unflagging criticism, responded by arguing that the defence of the Middle East was essential to the security of the United Kingdom itself. The crux of their new position, explained in April 1946, was that Soviet aggression could only be deterred by the existence, in the Middle East, of a capability to launch a strategic air offensive against the Baku oil production — and thus against Soviet war-making potential. In July the Chiefs of Staff added weight to their case by pointing out that there was no prospect of holding a Soviet attack against western Europe. Attlee, having observed that 'it was becoming difficult to justify our staying in the Middle East for any reason other than to be prepared for a war against Russia', refused to endorse the Chiefs of Staff strategy.

In two extraordinary weeks in January 1947, during which time a secret *ad hoc* Cabinet Committee known as GEN 163 approved the

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building of Britain's first atomic bomb, the unresolved issue of defence policy was also settled. On 5 January, Attlee indicated to Bevin in a closely argued memorandum that he regarded the Chiefs of Staff strategy as a 'strategy of despair'. And in a remarkable conclusion he stated: 'Unless we are persuaded that the USSR is irrevocably committed to a policy of world domination and that there is no possibility of her alteration, I think that before being committed to this strategy we should seek to come to an agreement with the USSR after consideration with Stalin of all our points of conflict'.

This was hardly the voice of an arch cold warrior. And whatever motivated Attlee to accept, only three days later, the production of the British bomb, an overwhelming fear of the Soviet Union was clearly absent from his considerations. Indeed, the next day, 9 January, Bevin bluntly accused the Prime Minister of appeasement — perhaps the most damaging and wounding retort from Attlee's closest political friend and ally. Attlee took no notice, his political will failing only in the face of a more direct challenge from the Chiefs of Staff led by Montgomery, Alanbrooke's successor as the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Returning from a visit to Moscow, Montgomery decided on a drastic course of action. Attlee was informed that the Chiefs of Staff would resign unless he endorsed their strategy. The Prime Minister, no doubt after much agonizing, capitulated on 13 January.

Whether Attlee could have taken any other course without jeopardizing his own position as Prime Minister is surely open to doubt. But the result of his political realism could be seen in the new few months as the Chiefs of Staff made clear that 'an immediate supply' of atomic bombs from the United States should be assured in the period before Britain possessed her own arsenal; and that it should be a cardinal principle of her policy 'to be prepared, equipped and able to use them immediately'.

At a time when, in an effort to redefine Britain's relations with the Soviet Union, the Labour Party is pledged to remove US bases, abandon Trident, and negotiate away Britain's Polaris force, it is perhaps pertinent to ask what response a future Labour Prime Minister fighting to implement this Labour Party policy, would get from the Chief of the Defence Staff. Equally, would the heavyweight Denis Healey, on present form likely to be Labour's future Foreign Secretary if they triumph at the polls, play the part of Ernest Bevin and side with the defence chiefs in some tiny Cabinet Committee which would no doubt consider the issue? Clearly, Attlee felt unable to accept the resignation of his Chiefs of Staff. If Neil Kinnock, as Prime Minister, is to proceed along the path of giving up Britain's independent nuclear deterrent, and with the probability, in that event, of a historic challenge from the defence chiefs, he will require consummate political skill to overcome the undoubtedly serious domestic and international repercussions of his government's action. □

The authors have written on Attlee for the Spring 1985 issue of International Affairs, *the quarterly journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs; their book* Britain, Russia and the Cold War, 1945-51 *is to be published by Macmillan in 1986.*

False teeth and bogus images

Anne Karpf

HERE'S SOME free advice. If you're over 60, and want to ensure that your peer group is properly represented by the media, make yourself male, white, wealthy, and powerful (in politics, religion, commerce, or the arts). Or become Nancy Reagan.

Otherwise, according to a new report by a group of old people, forget it. The British media may not caricature you quite as flagrantly as the Americans, but their sins of omission are multiple. When the Cambridge branch of U3A, the University of the Third Age — an amoebic body of older people who band together to teach and learn — monitored all four TV channels in 1983, they discovered the elderly absent from plays, soap operas, serials, adventure programmes, sit-coms, education programmes, feature films, cartoons, and children's programmes. Otherwise, their report says, everything's just dandy.[1]

U3A's findings confirm what recent American research has shown: people over 65, who comprise about 11 per cent of the population, make up 2.3 per cent of the fictional TV population. And, as former TV executive Stuart Hood put it, 'How often do you see a man or woman over the age of 60 presented in drama or comedy, for instance, as people who still have their faculties, who are capable of love and devotion, of thinking and planning and doing'?

The problem with leaving things out is that it invariably distorts what you leave in. Some (but not all) old people may be concerned about dentures and laxatives, but if you don't also show them as preoccupied with housing, relationships (sexual and other), leisure, nuclear weapons, etc, you slip into the old toothless-constipated caricature, the rocking-chair image.

But if old people as a group are neglected by the media, older women are virtually extinct. U3A found that women, although the majority of the elderly population, were grossly under-represented on TV, especially in central roles. And when the Women's Monitoring Network (a national group which regularly monitors the print media) scanned newspapers and magazines in 1983 for images of older women, they found that where they figured at all, they tended to be portrayed as frail victims (especially of violent attacks and muggings), even though women over 60 are the least likely group in British society to be victims of violent crime.[2]

Recurring stories were 'granny-bashing' — old women again as problems and dependants — and articles stressing sickness and medical problems among older women, perpetuating the myth that old age is invariably synonymous with ill-health. Magazines also emphasise the unacceptable nature of ageing, and vaunt the delights of youth ('My first grey hair was my last').

U3A found that the class composition of the elderly on TV is as distorted as the sex composition. Over four-fifths of those appearing belonged to the professional and managerial classes. These they dub the 'successful elderly', whose success in politics, commerce, the arts, etc, lands them on the box. The Reagans, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Pope, 'even when they are themselves biologically elderly . . . do not represent the elderly as a social category'.

Most of the images of older women they found on TV consisted of repeated pictures of Nancy Reagan on the news. They conclude, 'Coronation Street apart, the chances of a British woman not of the upper classes being presented as the chief character in a television programme are exceedingly small. Yet they must form a majority of all elderly viewers, and a substantial block of the audience as a whole . . . When the programme . . . bias towards males and towards the upper classes are combined, the result can only be called a caricature of the real social world of the elderly'. And they don't mention ethnic minorities: what chance of media visibility for an old, black, working-class woman?

This isn't to argue that the media should, or indeed could, exactly mirror the existing numerical make-up of our society: on the contrary, ideally we might want media which positively discriminates in favour of the socially disenfranchised. But what we have now are media which reproduce the powerlessness of particular social groups like the elderly.

This isn't simply another case of media-bashing: clearly the low esteem in which old people are held in our culture doesn't originate in the media, and is manifested equally in the way that social policies condemn them to poverty. Then they're deemed unimportant as consumers and an unimportant market to advertisers, and — bingo they're invisible in the media.

Yet things have been changing. The American Grey Panthers scrutinise TV programmes and loudly object to ageist portrayals, with some success so far. And with the current 'greying' of England, it's doubtful whether old people will tolerate the dentures-and-laxative image for much longer.

[1] *The Image of the Elderly on TV*, 63p from U3A, 8a Castle Street, Cambridge CB3 0AQ.

[2] *Women and Ageism*, 80p from Women's Monitoring Network, A Woman's Place, Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, London WC2.

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DIARY

Chris Mullin

Saigon, an acquaintance who used to be prime minister once said to me, is a ginger ale economy that likes to drink champagne. Ten years after Liberation the champagne is running thin, but supplies are by no means exhausted. On the terrace of the old Continental Palace Hotel you can still see officials of the *ancien régime* drinking themselves silly on liquor which would cost a month of most people's salary. On the sidewalks you can still see packets of Dunhill and *555* cigarettes on sale for the equivalent of two weeks' average earnings. But slowly, very slowly Saigon (or Ho Chi Minh City as we must now call it) is coming to terms with its reduced circumstances. Each time I come back I see the signs. A few more cars have given way to Hondas. A few more Hondas have given way to bicycles. A few more private traders have closed their doors for ever and gone to join relatives in Europe or America.

○

Talking of such people, I go in search of a family who used to run a small business near the Nguyen Hue boulevard in the centre of town. When I first met them, they were in hairdressing (and several other things besides). On my second visit they were a coffee shop with a jukebox blasting out American pop music. This time I find they have reverted to hairdressing with a sideline in fancy lacquerware. He is a rather hip old man. Very thin with grey hair which curls over his collar and a tendency to wear blue jeans. His wife is a beautiful woman in her mid-'60s and keeper of the family purse. They have 13 children and they are in the process of evacuating the lot. It is an operation that has already stretched over a decade and three continents. It involves careful planning and skilful diplomacy. Four of the children are now in the United States, one is in Canada, two are in France. Another two have already been granted foreign passports and are waiting to leave. This family are not political. Just people who once tasted champagne and cannot adapt to ginger ale.

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Visitors who don't know better change their money at the National Bank. At least one and a half hours should be set aside for the arduous process of translating dollars into Vietnamese dong. It is a small insight into the bureaucratic nightmare that awaits those who would do business in Vietnam. Those who change money at the bank receive eleven dong to the dollar — a rate at which a postcard home costs over £2 in stamps alone. Happily, however, our visit to the bank marks only the beginning of a long encounter with the mysteries of the Vietnamese exchange rate or, rather, *rates*. There are many. Official and unofficial. Our hotel, for example, charges 55 dong for a bottle of beer but, if you pay with a dollar bill, you receive 50 dong in change. Later we find other hotels offering up to 200 dong to the dollar. Still later we learn that the black market rate is around 350 and that the transaction can be completed in less than a minute. Naturally, I do not advise anyone to change money on the black market in a struggling socialist country but, if I were in charge of the Vietnamese economy, I would take a long, hard look at the workings of the National Bank.

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To Pham Van Hai, a state farm 20 miles outside Ho Chi Minh City. It is one of 14 set up on derelict land around the city to provide employment for the thousands of families who faced destitution at the end of the war. Each was given a small wooden house, a large plot of land and subsidised food. Jobs were provided converting the rest of the land into a huge pineapple farm. The going was tough. Long canals had to be dug by hand. Then the land had to be drained and rinsed of salt (Pham Van Hai is built on a salt marsh). Drinking water has to be brought in by truck from 20 miles away. At first there were disasters. It was several years before there was a harvest. Then inadequate transport caused most of the crop to rot before it reached market. Faced with this, many families preferred to risk destitution in the city, but those who persevered are winning. This was my third visit to Pham Van Hai and the transformation is remarkable. Trees, canals, gardens and houses of stone. Rich green vegetation where before there was only desert. A great achievement.

ROGER WODDIS

A caring parent's advice to his errant offspring

MPs have approved a private member's bill which provides life sentences for heroin and cocaine dealers.

Sit down, son, it's time we had a chat.
I didn't mind you torturing the cat,
Or not asking my permission
Before you put that girl from Tesco's in a certain condition.

No, what really gets under my skin
Is your getting involved with heroin;
Using it is bad enough,
But now your mother tells me you've been pushing the stuff.

That's a pretty filthy traffick,
Like selling the *Sun* or some rag equally pornographic,
And it could put you away for life
(Please stop fingering that knife).
If you really want to coin it *and* feel patriotic,
Why not flog arms to regimes that are corrupt and despotic?

Think big, son, think in terms of millions
And all those expendable civilians.
Get out of heroin and into something more fulfilling;
That way you'd really make a killing.

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With sadness I note the disappearance of the newspaper *Tin Sang*. It was set up some years ago by a remarkable man called Ngo Con Duc, who established himself as an opponent of the Thieu regime. During those Thieu years more than 300 editions were confiscated before Duc finally had to seek exile in Paris. After Liberation he came back and re-opened *Tin Sang* as a co-operative. It was such a success that it retailed on the streets at about five times the cover price. When I visited Ngo Con Duc in his office in 1980, the paper was making so much money that the co-op members had invested in a pig farm and a lacquerware factory. Duc told me that, although he had occasional run-ins with the authorities, no one had tried to close him down. He spoke too soon. *Tin Sang* was closed a year later, in 1981. The lacquerware co-operative was also a success. That was taken over by the State at the end of last year. Duc is now said to be working for the Import-Export department.

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The Americans are back. We first encounter an NBC camera team in the bar at the Majestic Hotel. They are unrepentant. 'Why you want to come to a dump like this?' they demand. We run into them again a couple of days later at Cu Chi, the remarkable underground tunnel system 30 miles out of Ho Chi Minh City which was home for the resistance fighters for the first years of the war. A special, sanitised and widened section of the tunnel has been prepared for foreigners to 'play Viet cong'. If the Americans want to find out why they lost, this is a good place to start looking. The signs, alas, are not auspicious. A peasant child peering at the NBC equipment is told curtly: 'You can look, sonny, but touch it and I'll break your legs'. Ten years and they have learned nothing.

○

I got back from Hanoi just in time to hear Michael Nicholson on ITN lambasting Vietnam for its dependence on the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was, said Mr Nicholson, Vietnam's 'only benefactor'. He was talking rubbish, of course. Sweden, for example, has built a huge paper mill at Bi Bang, north of Hanoi. Even so, Mr Nicholson might have had the grace to mention that one reason for the lack of Western influence in Vietnam is that America and its satellites have spent most of the last decade pursuing an aid — and, in some cases, also a trade — boycott of Vietnam.

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Chris Mullin

FROM THE ASHES, A NEW VULTURE

Ten years after the fall of Saigon, Chris Mullin finds that the continuing economic war by the US has driven Vietnam into dependency on the Soviet Union

WHEN THE FIRST North Vietnamese tanks crashed through the gates of the presidential palace in Saigon on the morning of 30 April 1975, no one knew what the future held for Vietnam.

To begin with expectations ran high. 'We have defeated the American invaders. Our beautiful country has for ever returned to the hands of our people', First Secretary, Le Duan, told the newly elected National Assembly shortly after the country had been formally re-unified in 1976. Le Duan went on: 'We are the complete masters of the immense mountains, plains and seas. . .we will rebuild our Fatherland, making it ten times greater and more beautiful than it is today'.

Alas, it was not to be. Le Duan was speaking before an endless litany of new disasters — wars in Kampuchea and with China, a devastating series of floods and typhoons — were unleashed upon his exhausted people. These, combined with a political system that was simply not geared to the needs of peacetime, were bound to make recovery a slow and painful process.

Any assessment of the last ten years must begin with the inheritance. When they won in April 1975, the leaders of Vietnam took control of a country that was devastated. In the South they inherited an entirely artificial economy which had been kept alive solely by huge infusions of dollars. American military and economic aid to the South was running at US $2,200 million in the last year of the war. It paid for an army of over one million men; it paid the wages of most of the 400,000 civil servants; it paid for the import of rice, petrol, fertiliser and much else besides. All this came to an end abruptly on 30 April 1975. The result was the collapse of the southern economy and the creation of a huge pool of unemployed and potentially disaffected people, who could never again hope to enjoy a standard of living similar to that which they had enjoyed during the war.

In the North the problems were different. The people there had known nothing but austerity for all of living memory and they had every reason to expect that the end of the war would bring about a rapid improvement in their living standards. Their economy, too, was to a large extent artificial and while the foreign aid upon which they depended would not be switched off abruptly, it could not be expected to last forever.

The first five-year plan envisaged rapid progress towards self-sufficiency in food, which would lay the foundation for an industrial base. It also envisaged an economy based on trade with both East and West. Foreign investment was to be permitted on relatively generous terms and efforts were made to restore diplomatic links with the United States, even at the cost of abandoning claims to reparations.

Very little of this came to pass. The targets for food production proved wildly optimistic. Western investment proved virtually non-existent. There was hope of oil. Companies from West Germany, Italy and Japan explored for oil off the coast of South Vietnam, but gave up after failing to find it in marketable quantities.

As for relations with the United States, negotiations continued until the autumn of 1978 when, according to Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, 'we had reached agreement even to the extent of saying they could have back their former consulate in Hanoi'. But, he adds, 'then, suddenly, everything was postponed. I now realise that the cause was normalisation of relations between America and China'.

From that time onwards the leaders of Vietnam realised that they would be almost entirely dependent upon the Soviet bloc for capital to develop their country. A series of bad harvests only increased their dependence. By 1979 the Soviet Union was supplying 2.5 million tons of grain, 17 million metres of fabric and thousands of tons of fertilisers and medicines. The Soviet Union was also said to be engaged in 285 projects 'of national significance' ranging from the construction of power stations to the two massive new bridges across the Red River near Hanoi.

Meanwhile, economic planners had begun to Stalinise the economy in exactly the way that had already proved so disastrous in other socialist countries. In the South thousands of small farmers were pressed to join co-operatives and sell their produce exclusively to the State. In the cities renewed efforts were made to drive the small traders into productive activity in factories and new economic zones which were,

Above: slow train to the future — at high speed the people would fall off

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in many cases, run by people with little experience or ability. The results were a slump in food production, a new wave of refugees and an economy that was grinding to a halt. Something had to be done.

ALTHOUGH THEY are old men, the leaders of Vietnam have never been afraid of trying out new ideas. In September 1979, amid a great deal of breast beating about the inadequacy of economic management, radical new measures were introduced. Membership of co-operatives would from now on, it was said, be voluntary. In future farmers would be obliged to sell only an agreed quota of their output to the State. The rest they could sell on the free market.

The result has been an increase in food production to the point where in 1983 Vietnam for the first time achieved a tenuous self-sufficiency in rice. Today the countryside is blooming. Vietnam is one of the few countries where the peasants are better off than city dwellers. No traveller through Vietnam can fail to notice the amount of building going on in the countryside, as the farmers spend their new wealth.

Assuming that self-sufficiency in food can be sustained, the next goal must be self-sufficiency in energy. Until now Vietnam has been entirely dependent on the Soviet Union for supplies of petrol, although oil and natural gas are said to have been discovered in large quantities off the southern coast and in the Mekong delta.

In November 1983 Foreign Minister Thach insisted that Vietnam would be self-sufficient in oil by the end of this year. There is no sign of this so far. Oil and gas prospecting has now been taken over by the Soviet Union and a refinery is being built at Vung Rao, near Ho Chi Minh City, but it is unclear whether either oil or gas is coming ashore in any serious quantity.

As for electricity, major power stations are under construction at Pha Lai, Hoa Binh, Tri An and Da Nang. These are expected to begin producing electricity in two years.

Once an infrastrusture has been established, the Vietnamese will want to build an industrial base capable of providing them with a modest increase in their standard of living but they also have to earn the foreign exchange to help repay the huge debts owed to the Soviet bloc countries. Already there are signs that Vietnam is becoming a tropical garden for COMECON, the Soviet trading bloc. Although barely able to feed itself, Vietnam is shipping pineapples, tomatoes, bananas, coffee, tea, peanuts and pig meat to the COMECON countries.

Vietnam is also becoming a source of cheap labour for COMECON. One Polish technician in Ho Chi Minh City described to me a Czech shirt factory where, he said, the Czechs were shipping in ready-made cotton cloth to be stitched into shirts by Vietnamese labour and shipped straight out again for sale in Eastern Europe. The Pole described this arrangement as 'colonial'.

I left Vietnam last week on a plane with a party of young Vietnamese from Hue in central Vietnam. They were on their way to work in a textile factory in Budapest. The terms of the arrangement were unclear, but it seemed they would be away for five years and could expect to earn little more than pocket money. When they return they will have jobs in a textile factory which the Hungarians are building at Hue.

Dependence on the Soviet bloc has its price in other respects, too. Repair and refuelling facilities for Soviet warships at Cam Ranh bay, the former American base; a joint exercise between Soviet and Vietnamese marines in April last year and, most galling of all, Vietnamese lip service to 'the noble and generous action of the Soviet Union' in Afghanistan.

NO DOUBT MOST Vietnamese leaders consider this a small and inevitable price to pay in return for help on such a scale. It is hard to see what else they could do. The reconstruction of Vietnam is taking place almost entirely without assistance from those countries which destroyed it in the first place.

The United States government still seems to consider itself at war with Vietnam. American businessmen who trade with Vietnam risk prosecution and American diplomats have devoted much energy to isolating Vietnam in the international community. On one occasion they even went so far as to organise the cancellation of a World Bank loan. Recently an American congressional committee has voted to give $5 million to resistance groups in Kampuchea.

There are signs that Vietnam's enemies have not been content to confine themselves to subsidising the Khmer resistance. In December last year the Vietnamese staged a public trial in Ho Chi Minh City of 21 men who had apparently been caught infiltrating weapons and forged money into the country.

At the trial, which received little publicity in the West, the men gave detailed statements in which they described several visits to China and claimed on one occasion to have met a deputy foreign minister. Another described contacts with the American embassy in Bangkok and named a second secretary, Donald B. Coleman.

The forged money was said to have been supplied by the Chinese and collected by boat from Hainan island. The guns and explosives were said to have been loaded on to boats by Thai soldiers and to have been escorted into international waters by Thai naval patrol boats.

Such policies are short-sighted and can only have the effect of making Vietnam more dependent on the Soviet Union than its leaders ever intended. After the war in Europe it took a huge Marshall Aid programme to provide the investment for recovery. Something similar was needed after the war in Vietnam. That would have been the decent option for America and its allies. But then decency was never our strong suit in Vietnam. □

Chris Mullin is a freelance journalist who has just returned from Vietnam.

VIETNAM 2

OH, WHAT A NOBLE WAR

US box-office 'n' bestseller rewrite history. John Pilger reports

ON MY WALL is a photograph of what appears to be a swamp, which I took a few weeks after the end of the war in Vietnam ten years ago. I was standing in a hillside cemetery among the graves of a town's entire anti-aircraft militia, all of them young women. . .Vo Thi Than, aged 22, Duong Thi Than, aged 19. . .and I had asked where the town itself was. I was told I was looking directly at it, or rather where it had been. It was now a swamp, which on closer inspection was a series of overlapping craters. On the far side of the largest crater I could see a small pile of bricks, the foundation of something. There were no paddies, no shrines, no rickety high fences of bamboo, no draught animals, as there always are. There were no people, of course. They were dead or gone.

Dong Loc, north of the seventeenth parallel, had been a farming community of several thousand people, whose 'strategic importance' was that it stood close to Highway One, the 'Street of No Joy' running along the curved spine of Vietnam. Dong Loc had been bombed back to the Stone Age and beyond, one of hundreds of such places about which we heard nothing during a war said to be 'saturated' by the media.

There is no longer farming nearby because chemical agents dropped on the earth have caused it to salinate and set, in some places like rock, and it has yet to regenerate. According to a 1970 US Senate report, 'the United States dumped a quantity of toxic chemical amounting to six pounds per head of population, including women and children'. And that was only in the south, the American 'ally', where people and places were destroyed in order to 'save' them. So much of Vietnam today endures a twilight of unique devastation, insidious and perhaps infinite, in which the poisons run through the soil, water and genes: legacies of a 'noble war'.

President Reagan has described it as such, and you might expect that. But on the tenth anniversary of the capture of Saigon, 'noble war' has gained wide currency in the United States as unpalatable, 'forgotten' facts are rendered obsolete. Last month, according to *Reuter*, an opinion poll asked a cross section of Americans how much they remembered about the war; more than a third could not say which side America had supported. 'Historical amnesia' may not be new; what is new is the speed with which the revisionists have worked, although 'revisionism' is not entirely apt because it implies new facts are to hand, demanding a change of perspective, when the old facts remain at bay, unheeded, such as those in the *Pentagon Papers*, the 'secret history' of the war's fraud. In the absence of these old facts old lies and illusions are being transmuted into history. This is known as the 'new Vietnam scholarship'.

THERE IS something genuinely Orwellian

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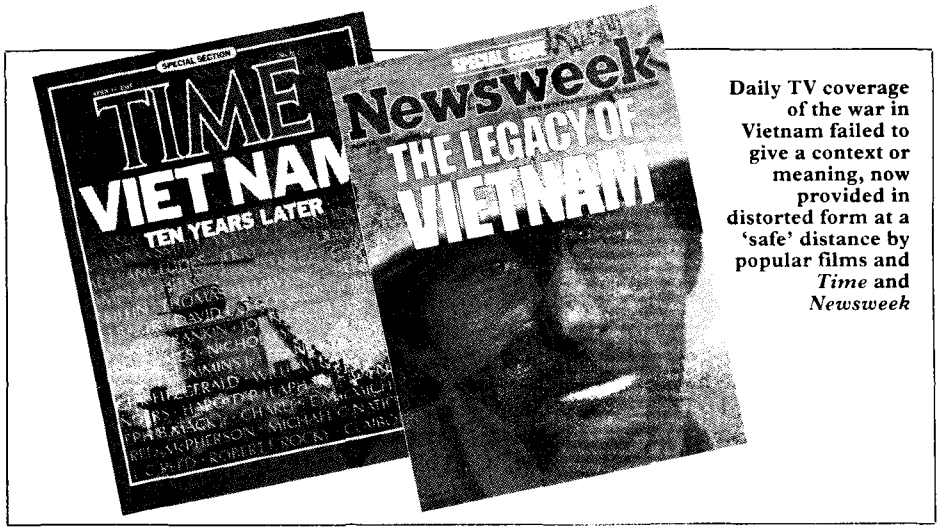

Daily TV coverage of the war in Vietnam failed to give a context or meaning, now provided in distorted form at a 'safe' distance by popular films and *Time* and *Newsweek*

about all of this. 'New' Vietnam scholars are invariably old faces. The *Sunday Times* recently gave Henry Kissinger most of a page to justify that 'the ultimate political goal of America was noble: to enable a distant people to resist tyranny. . .' For example, to Kissinger, 1985 model, the media were to blame in 'failing to distinguish between what was inherent in modern weaponry and what represented deliberate cruelty'. Pushing people out of helicopter gunships was, of course, not deliberate but 'inherent in the weaponry'. Or, in Kissinger's case, the consequences of the secret and illegal despatch of B52 bombers against peasant Cambodia were not deliberate, but 'inherent in the weaponry'.

A tenet of the 'new scholarship' is that the media besmirched America's innocence in Vietnam and helped it to 'lose' the war. The irony of this is that most of the media *supported* the war and opposed only the way in which it was fought. David Halberstam, the *bête noir* of the Kennedy administration for his reporting from Saigon, wrote, 'We would have liked nothing better than to believe the war was going well, and it could eventually be won'. Indeed, the 'big story' of the war was not, as some believe, whether America won or lost the battles of Tet in 1968; it was the atrocious nature of the American assault machine year in and year out.

Atrocity pictures hung in Saigon news offices for years before the My Lai massacre made news. 'Operation Speedy Express' in which 5,000 civilians were slaughtered in a 'pacification sweep' in 1968 was not reported for several years and then only in abbreviated form. There are many other examples.

The epitome of the 'new scholarship' is a 700-page history of Vietnam in which Stanley Karnow represents the old liberal line, which is also Reagan's, that the war was a 'failed crusade' conducted for the 'loftiest intentions', that the communists were 'terrorists' who were 'merciless' and 'brutal' in contrast to the Americans who were 'sincere' and 'earnest' and whose 'instincts were liberal'. Good guy Lyndon Johnson 'mistakenly imputed (American) values to the communists', believing that 'they would respond like reasonable people' (to American threats to demolish their towns) but of course these communists were 'rarely troubled by heavy human tolls'.

THIS MONTH across America yet another 'new' history is being launched in a hail of television commercials in which the author is seen with smiling GIs and a voice-over intones, 'No more Vietnams can mean we will not try again. It should mean we will not *fail* again!'. The historian is Richard Nixon and his *No More Vietnams* is tipped to become a best-seller. Nixon says that America was actually winning the war when it lost the will to 'finish the job' — that is, to do to every town and village what its pilots did to Dong Loc.

Nixon is typical of many re-writers. To them, the war was caused by the communist bad people in the north attacking non-communist good people in the south. In their tales there is nothing about Ho Chi Minh seeking American help in 1945/50, nothing about the United States underwriting the bloody French attempt to wrest back their colony, nothing about the CIA 'inventing' the Republic of South Vietnam in the south, and installing Ngo Dinh Diem, 'Asia's George Washington', to run what the Agency's notorious Colonel Lansdale called his 'fascistic state'; and nothing about the American sabotage of national elections, and nothing about the American-arranged terror, the victims of which took up arms to defend themselves and later their homeland against the foreign invader.

That Ho Chi Minh waited so long in sending regular units against the American assault seems extraordinary in retrospect, or perhaps it was testament to the morale of those southerners who fought back and with whom the majority of the rural people of South Vietnam 'primarily identified', according to the celebrated counter insurgency expert, John Paul Vann. Such a perspective is certainly not 'new scholarship' material, because it says that what was done was no more a 'mistake' than Hiroshima was a 'mistake'.

At the level of popular culture, always the vanguard in matters of national redemption, post-war propaganda has worked assiduously to reduce the Vietnamese people to their wartime status: that of stick figures on television, roasted or regular, gooks good or bad, slopes commie or non-commie: it doesn't matter. For example, *The Deerhunter*, now a family video favourite and recently shown on BBC television, 'articulates the new patriotism', according to *Time*-speak. The movie is basically recurring orgiastic scenes in which square-jawed Caucasian warriors ('liberal by instinct') are forced to play Russian roulette with their barbaric Oriental captors. This invented horror is 'meaningful', according to the director, who made sure the heroes sang 'God Bless America' just before the credits.

In the otherwise sensitive *Killing Fields*, scenes which showed the Vietnamese as the liberators of Cambodia were cut. These cuts included, according to the script, Vietnamese soldiers handing out food and 'doing their best to minister to the needs' of Cambodian people — all of which happened, and is anathema to the revisionists. My own view is that these films have become by default a kind of popular media history of Indochina partly because the daily television coverage failed to provide context and meaning; it was relentless bang-bang between the commercials, to which many people must have developed a tolerance, unlike the moving, 'meaningful horror' in *The Deerhunter*. That the truth is not permitted to intervene in such 'new' and packaged history is by the way; what matters is the strength of the purgative.

The complement of this 'revision' is revenge. On 30 April 1975 all of Vietnam was declared 'Category Z' under an American 'trading with the enemy' law dating back to World War One. The principal weapon is food. Following the havoc caused by Typhoon Nancy in 1982 American humanitarian groups applied to send food and medicine to the homeless and hungry. The State Department held up the application for six months, then rejected it on the grounds that the emergency had passed. Oxfam America has been denied licences to send to Vietnam seed processing equipment and assistance towards food supplements for pre-school children. Mrs Thatcher has enthusiastically joined in the punishment by persuading the EEC to stop shipments of skimmed milk for children. The direct results, according to the director of Paediatric Hospital No. 2 in Saigon, has been 'devastating' with the price of a kilo of milk rising to ten times that of meat.

There are many problems and injustices outstanding in Vietnam: in the fields of human rights, reconciliation, war ruin, economic management and poverty. They are problems similar to those which faced the 'revolutionary' United States of America in 1776 when 100,000 tory refugees fled to Canada, most of them 'boat people'. In the present gush of anniversary remembrance, much of it so self-centred that the Vietnamese remain invisible as *people*, one comforting illusion is that Vietnam today is somehow 'worse' than America's colonial mutation which, according to Amnesty in 1973, incarcerated almost half the world's known political prisoners and allowed 'systematic' torture.

Scant mention is made of post-war Vietnam's attempts to reconciliate with America, to the point of abandoning the Paris agreement on reparations, and its resistance to falling in with the Soviet Union. Indeed, there are many in Vietnam who believe that 40 years of cold war between the Eastern and Western blocs offers the opportunity of creating a new synthesis, but the enforced dependence on the Soviet Union and the absence of Western ties unbalances the equation. Not only is it time to stop lying about the past; it is time to end the war against Vietnam. Perhaps, as a bonus, other 'Vietnams' may then be spared. □

John Pilger is on the staff of the Daily Mirror.

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SOCIAL OWNERSHIP

Sweden has now had Labour governments for a total of nearly 50 years. The Swedes are not planning to mark the anniversary, but it is a good moment for the British Labour Party to look at the phenomenal success of its sister party, argues a Fabian pamphlet by Martin Linton published today.* This edited extract looks at the party's unique experiment in worker ownership: wage-earner funds

WAGE-EARNER FUNDS deserve closer attention from socialists in this country. They were introduced by Sweden's Labour government in 1984, after nearly ten years of debate, and represent the first serious attempt by a democratic socialist party to use worker ownership rather than State ownership as the main road to socialism.

But it will take all the electoral and organisational skills of the Swedish Social-democratic Labour Party (SAP) and the Swedish trade union confederation (LO) to overcome the voters' suspicion of this new form of public ownership in the elections that are due later this year.

The idea came originally from the LO's chief economist in the early seventies, Rudolf Meidner, a bluff German-born Swede, who had been associated with a rather right-wing LO establishment in the fifties and sixties but was finding that the logic of his own policies was pushing him further to the left.

His idea arose in response to the problem of excess profits in some companies which were a side effect of the LO's 'solidarity' policy. This was designed to reduce differentials between workers as a step towards equality by giving a lower percentage rise to the higher-paid workers in the annual wage bargain with the employers. It meant, however, that companies employing high-paid workers, such as Volvo, got away with lower pay rises and therefore made higher profits. The problem was how to persuade Volvo workers to accept low pay rises when the company made high profits.

Meidner hit on the idea of a tax that would cream away the excess profits and use them to buy shares in the company that would be vested, collectively, in the workers. The Volvo workers would then be rewarded for their self-restraint in the pay round with shares in their company, which they could not sell, but which would bring them voting rights to elect workers to the board, dividends which could be used to train them in management and the chance, eventually, to assume control of their own company. This would achieve four of the labour movement's objectives at the same time: it would advance equality and industrial democracy, reduce capital accumulation and redistribute wealth.

Meidner published a table to show how his scheme could give workers enough shares to take over some of Sweden's most profitable companies in 20, 25, 35 or 75 years according to the level at which the tax was set. The reaction of Swedish industry was one of unrestrained hysteria.

The employers' federation launched a campaign of unprecedented ferocity against the funds. They were 'pure and unadulterated socialism'. They would lead to a flight of capital and an investment strike, they warned. They were 'expropriations'. They would mean the 'gradual socialisation' of Sweden.

The employers poured millions of kroner into the anti-fund campaign. They financed a huge anti-Labour campaign, even though the SAP had not yet at that stage taken a position on the scheme. This was undoubtedly a part of the reason for Labour's defeat in 1976 after 44 years in office.

Some would say that Marx had foreseen this a century before when he said that if the 'expropriators' were ever 'expropriated', they would stop at nothing in their defence of their ownership of capital. The funds, gradualist as they were, threatened the very heart of the system — the ownership of capital — and the owners of capital were the first to grasp their importance. As one of the leaders of the employers' federation said privately to the government: 'This is about power and we will fight you every inch of the way'.

In the 1979 election funds were again an issue, even though the SAP was not committed to them and had no proposals to put before the voters. Again the propaganda against the funds contributed to Labour's defeat. It was not until its 1981 congress that the SAP finally adopted a firm proposal. But by then it was very different from the proposal that Meidner had made in 1976.

Instead of the pure form of worker ownership in the original scheme, what was now proposed was that the excess profits tax should be paid into a regional fund belonging to all the workers in the region and it should then be invested in companies, not necessarily the ones paying the tax.

The funds would be controlled by regional boards that would be initially appointed by the government, but ultimately elected. The majority of board members would have to be employee representatives, whether appointed or elected, so the wage-earners would always be in control of the funds. However, one feature remained unchanged from the Meidner plan. Whenever the board bought shares in a company, the workforce in that company would be entitled to have half the voting rights, if they wanted them, up to a ceiling of 20 per cent.

The build-up of the funds would be deliberately slow with about £200 million coming in every year, less than 1 per cent of the value of all quoted shares but even this snail's pace socialism was enough to enable the employers to conjure up a picture in which individual companies could be taken over quite rapidly by trade union bureaucrats who would have no idea how to run them.

AS THE SAP approached the 1982 election it was clear that wage-earner funds were not going to be an election winner. Their concern was to make sure that they were not an election loser.

So Olof Palme announced three clear limitations on the operation of the proposed funds in order to answer the fear that the scheme was open-ended: the funds would only collect money until 1990; the maximum that the funds would be allowed to hold in any one company would be 40 per cent; they would be expected to yield a real return of 3 per cent on their investments.

This killed off the bourgeois parties' scare campaign and brought the focus of the election back to the issue which helped the SAP to win. Poll analysis has now shown that wage-earner funds were no longer a central issue by the end of the campaign and the SAP is keen to keep it that way.

The funds came into existence formally on 1 January 1984, the chairs and members of the boards were appointed by the autumn and they set to work on the stock market without any signs of the flight of capital or the investment strike that the employers had warned of.

The SAP has not sought to convince the public of the need for the funds on ideological grounds but has always based its argument firmly on economic necessities. Funds will be used to invest in the new industries that will secure Sweden's future as a highly advanced economy. They will also cement together Sweden's wage-bargaining system, because they will dissuade workers in highly profitable industries from using their bargaining strength to the full.

Wage-earner funds have provided them with a new way forward that promises socialisation without bureaucratisation. The power of the State is used, not to try to manage every factory, but to enable the workers in the company and the wage-earners as a whole to share in and ultimately to own and to manage the means of their own production, essentially a form of co-operative self-management backed by the legislative power of the State.

All this has created huge waves in the small pool of Swedish politics and has brought confrontation on a scale that seems quite unSwedish. Indeed many of the funds' critics within the SAP say they must have been imported from the British Labour Party — no other party would put forward a policy that was so unpopular.

But the SAP has no intention of abandoning its commitment to the funds. If it wins the 1985 election, then by the time of the next election in 1988, the present scheme will nearly have run its course and will, it hopes, be as entrenched in the fabric of Swedish society as the health service or the nursery school. □

*The Swedish Road to Socialism, *Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St, London SW1, £1.50 post free.*

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LETTERS

Whose civil liberties?

Melissa Benn, Ann Sedley, Charles Foster

It was good to see your editorial (*NS* 19 April) recognise that after years of Thatcherism the Left must 'become the champions of civil liberty'. Less welcome were your two articles, by Bernard Crick and Andrew Lumsden, on current arguments within NCCL. Both Crick and Lumsden indulge in covert Left bashing, implying that the history of the Left and labour movement's defence of civil liberties is little more than an embarrassment which must now be buried rather than a record of which to be proud — and improved upon.

Certainly any civil liberty organisation must be broad based. But, unlike Bernard Crick, we think this requires a bit more than a smattering of approving articles by Tory and Liberal MPs in *The Times*. To be genuinely broad based NCCL must gain the trust and commitment of all sections of society and particularly those who daily experience the effects of institutional racism and sexism.

NCCL is failing to do this. This is nothing new; the organisation has always been predominantly white. It has done some worthy anti-discrimination work, on immigration law and practice, policing and 'positive action' — a concept which Crick seems barely to grasp. And at its last AGM, NCCL voted to refuse knowingly to give advice to groups like the NF.

We believe that position is right. The issue of advice giving cannot be fudged, and certainly not by such absurd formulas as Larry Gostin's that members of racist groups be advised 'when it is not in furtherance of their racism'. How can any advice to the NF *not* be furtherance of its racism? This is all the more crucial now given NF attempts to gain respectability — the presentation of Patrick Harrington as a clean cut 'moderate', and the recent issuing of a manifesto.

Crick is right to declare that 'liberty as a principle must be modified by other principles'. One of these key principles must be anti-racism (and anti-discrimination of all kinds). Well meaning white people paying lip service to anti-racism is just not enough; there must be a determination to make it concrete. Not giving advice to groups like the NF is a first step.

'Colonial style' Black Sections

Rita Austin, Cardiff

Your assumptions about the marginal nature of Cardiff Central, and its black activism in support of Black Sections as significant in parliamentary selection (*NS* 19 April) needs to be challenged.

Regrettably, Labour came a poor third here in 1983, and even though this constituency is said to have the highest ethnic minority population in South Wales, it is equally regrettable that the local Labour Party has done little to encourage minority ethnic participation in party affairs. I am one of two black members of the Cardiff Central GC, and we are two among 10 black members. A distinct minority, though perhaps notable in that both of us as county council candidates may be seen to be black representatives for Labour determined to attract a wider appeal.

No sign of massive black activism then in the formal structures of the local party and precious little among black voters locally, though their voting intentions are correctly assumed to favour Labour. In our discussion on the consultative paper 'Black People and the Labour Party', not surprisingly much of the debate was taken up with Black Sections. Support was found among the followers of the left papers you mention, but not among black members; and many other members professed themselves to be undecided. The Black Sections debate is no longer one of its merits alone. There are now left brownie points to be gained. Some of us feel that effective black representation will be the net loser.

Marc Wadsworth knows from me — a parliamentary candidate elsewhere in 1983, and a member of the NEC working party — that I do not support Black Sections. He knows too of my regret that my local party has not done nearly enough to secure an effective representation of black interests in Labour affairs. He may not know of my efforts since my return a year ago to redress this. But what he cannot properly do is to quote Cardiff Central as a marginal seat characterised by black Labour Party activism in support of Black Sections, simply to add weight to his view that Labour black activism is not purely a London phenomenon.

Much has been written about Black Sections in which the need to secure more black representatives of and for the Party has been too readily seen as synonymous with encouraging a better representation of black interests in the Party. Both are valid socialist goals, but the political means to attain them and the considerations surrounding them are distinct. It is by no means the case that Black Sections will enhance the representation of black interests. And though they may well advance the careers of a few more black representatives within the Party structure, given the wider considerations which must characterise candidate selection for public office, the effect of Black Sections on electoral success may be quite the opposite of the promises now made.

Currently in Cardiff Central we do better in selecting black representatives to carry Labour's flag to a diverse electorate than in enhancing black representation in party affairs generally. Constitutional distractions hardly serve the interest of either.

But as you say, at this stage 'the ability to bluff is all'. *Bluffing* blacks into believing that a separatist party organisation is either socialist or efficacious is a relic of colonial style and attitude. Yet another bluff to add to the black burden of broken promises?

Helping the Sikhs

P. R. Chakravarti, First Secretary (P&I), The High Commission of India

Amiya Rao and Amrit Wilson (*NS* 12 April) have reported on the position of the Sikhs today in Delhi. To balance their one-sided picture, I would like to enumerate below the steps taken by the Government of India for the rehabilitation of the riot victims:

1. Bank loans over Rupees 200 million have been

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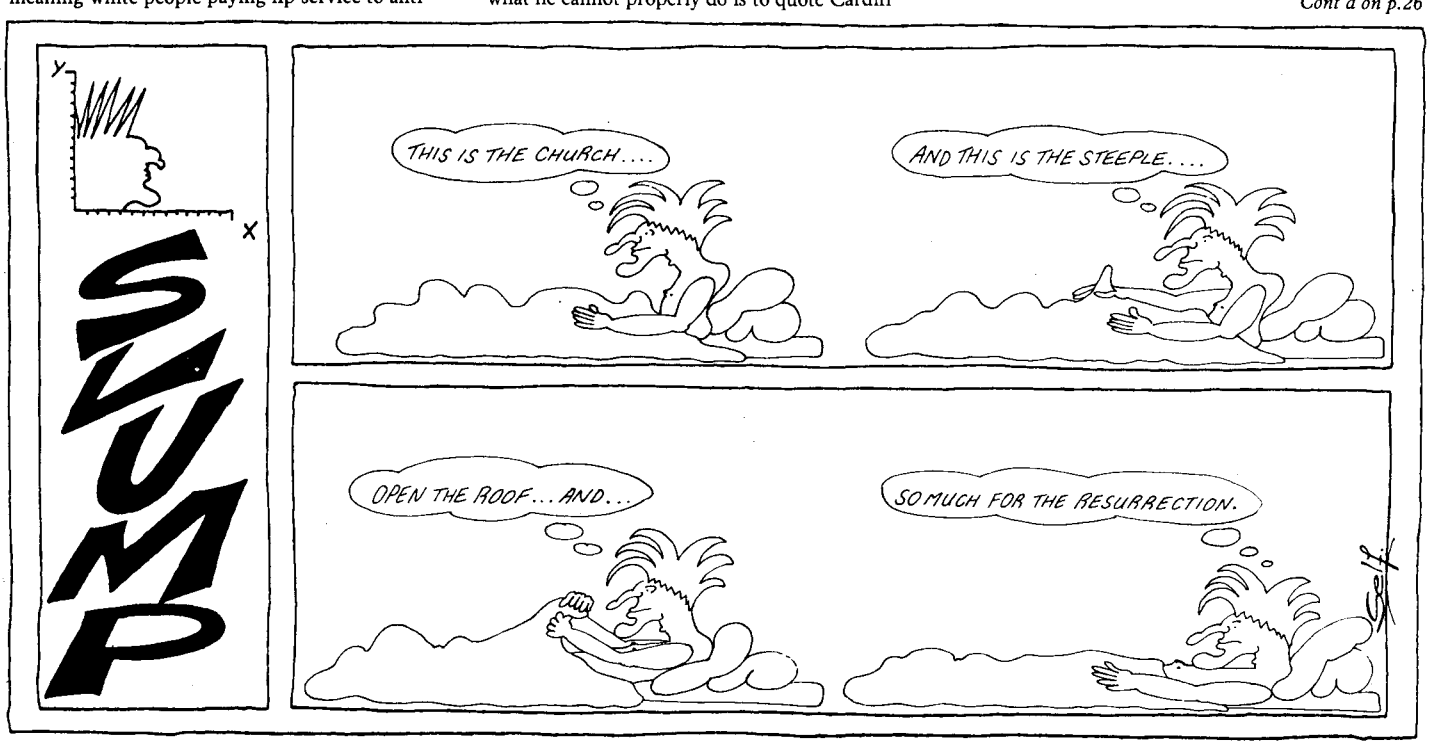

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Room for improveme

London still has a huge housing crisis. Tens of thousands are homeless and one home in four is unfit for human habitation, in serious disrepair, or lacking basic amenities such as a bathroom.

Although the very worst conditions are to be found in private sector rented housing, many council homes are now over 50 years old and badly in need of modernisation.

In 1980 the GLC began transferring its homes to the London boroughs and undertook a government-imposed legal duty to renovate that housing. As a result the GLC is investing in a massive £1,000 million programme of improvement up to 1992.

This programme is the biggest of its kind in the country.

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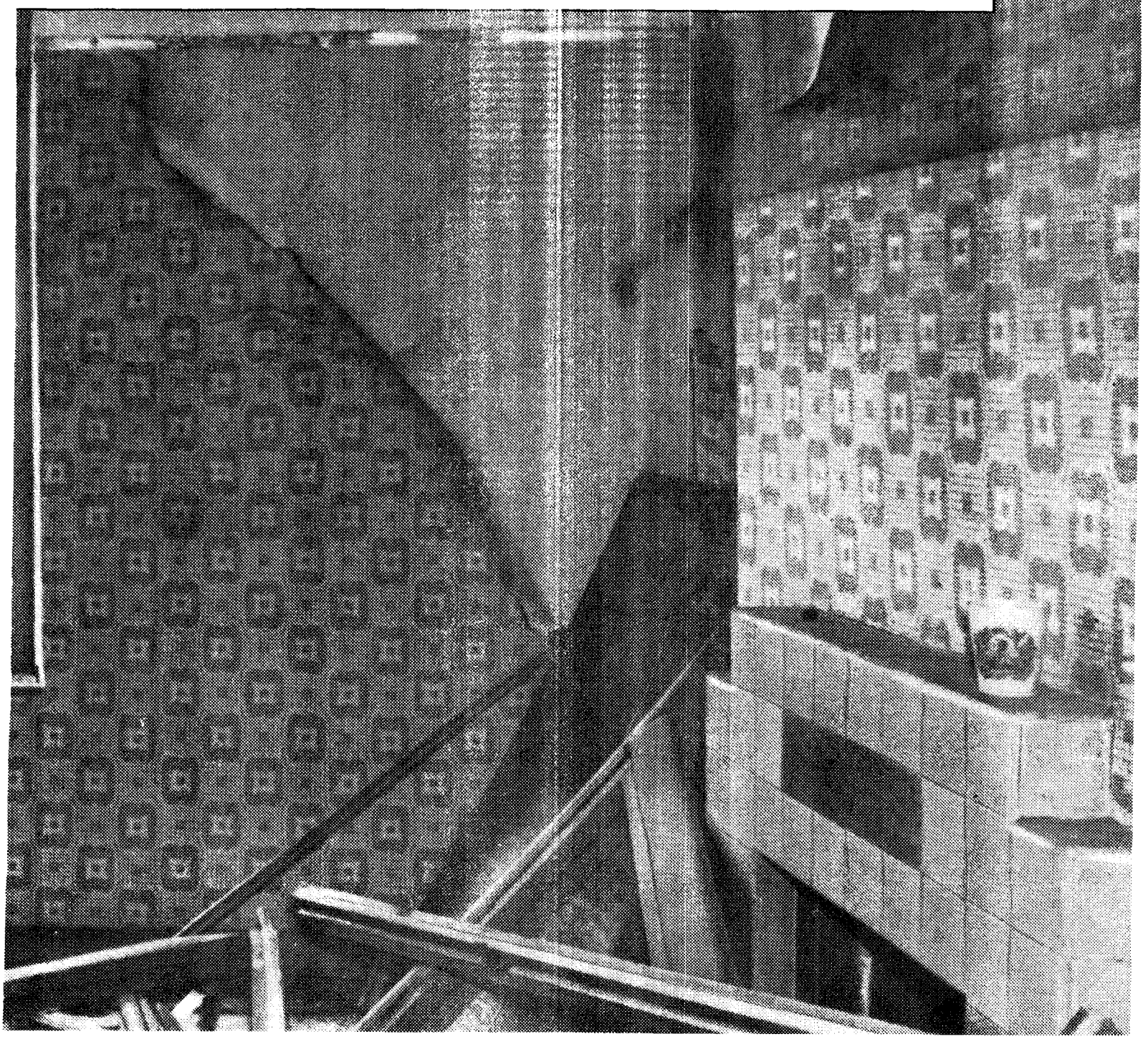
It...or are we for cuts?



It has required the expertise both of the GLC and the private construction industry to deal with the immense problems concerned.

Abolition of the GLC would at best mean a tremendous disruption to the renovation programme. At worst, it could end it altogether. The Government has stated that the London boroughs will receive the money previously allocated to the GLC. However, during the past five years, the money made available by the Government for public investment in housing in London has been more than halved. Furthermore, a cut of £65 million in housing allocations was hailed as a 'victory' by the Secretary of State.

What price decent housing for Londoners after 1986, with this record?

GLC
Working for London

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advanced to over 7,000 Sikhs whose movable and immovable property suffered damage;
2. 30 banks have got together to arrange loans for the purchase of trucks, taxis, autorickshaws and equipment to start business;
3. Compensation to widows and others has been extended to the tune of Rs.44.50 million;
4. Over 10,000 claims have been filed for compensation. These are being processed;
5. 990 widows have been allotted residences in different areas of Delhi;
6. In addition to compensation, all widows have been given ex gratia grants from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund;
7. Jobs for 900 widows have been arranged in different industrial units in Delhi;
8. 1,129 sponsorships for children have been arranged;
9. Arrangements for packed lunch, creche and free transport have also been made.

Also ignored in your report is the fact that the Special Investigation Cell headed by an Additional Commissioner of Police has launched prosecution against 1,900 individuals involved in the riots.

The Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, while expressing reservations about a judicial inquiry into the riots, had on no occasion ruled it out. This is clearly borne out by the decision of the Indian government to order a judicial inquiry into the riots by a sitting Judge of the Supreme Court. The government has also lifted the ban on the militant All-India Sikh Students' Federation and will be shortly releasing the leaders of the Akali Dal (Party) who are still in detention.

Careful theories

Bernard Crick, Edinburgh

Extraordinary for 'Islander' (*NS* 12 April) to lapse back into the past and bravely set himself up as anonymous commissar for theoretical rectitude over a reviewer. He mocks the beginning of my review of Pimlott on Dalton — 'How inadequate are general theories to explain how individuals form their political allegiances' — as implicit liberal individualism and as showing a contempt for critical theory. A pity he cannot read. I said 'inadequate' and not 'irrelevant'. I sign what I write so care what I say and am careful. I was defending a proper use of biography, not saying, in parody words he puts in my mouth, 'put theory aside and go back to a history of chaps; good chaps, bad chaps and, of course, odd chaps'. One needs careful, empirical biography as well as relevant general theories to explain why *any individual*, famous or ordinary, good or bad, holds the views that he or she does.

My views on the primacy of theory are accessible enough in my *Political Theory and Practice, In Defence of Politics* and *Socialist Theory and Socialist Values*. 'Islander' as a Marxist does not like my kind of socialist theory. But why be so uncharitable and venomous as to imply that I am therefore a liberal individualist which he must know to be untrue? There are other positions. This kind of bile does not even impress opponents. Why use it among ourselves?

Beds for ENDS

Moira Weaver, END office administrator

END is holding its annual supporters' conference in London on Saturday and Sunday 8 and 9 June. We desperately need help from people willing to provide overnight accommodation on the Saturday night. If you can help, can you please let us know how many people you can put up? Write to: END, Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ; or phone Moira/Fiona on 01-587 1563.

FEEDBACK

Shaping our New Jerusalems

FRANCIS MULHERN's provocative piece (*NS* 22 March) celebrating the dynamism and political importance of contemporary feminist writing was a welcome contribution to current debate on the role of culture in socialist and feminist politics. In his laudable eagerness to argue for the political significance of new feminist utopian fiction he has ignored the American context of this writing, and the meaning of its enthusiastic reception in Britain.

For the specifically *literary* renaissance that Mulhern cites as the unique contribution of feminism to cultural politics is much more an American phenomenon than a British one. This is so in spite of the historical prominence of women novelists in Britain, and the fact that the novel is one of the few public spaces where women may engage with social and political ideas. Moreover the genres of anti-realist, proto-utopian fiction that he singles out do not have as much attraction for black or white feminists writing fiction out of and into the British experience, as they do for British readers.

Mulhern's choice, therefore, of three American women authors to give cultural provenance to the largely British tendency of socialist feminism, throws up more questions than it answers about the relationship between social movements and culture. As Barbara Taylor has so recently pointed out, it is precisely the speculative, utopian elements in the history of British socialism that have been suppressed in twentieth century socialist agendas. That suppression, I would suggest, accounts in part for the absence of a strong utopian genre in British feminist fiction.

In its absence may we not simply, as Mulhern implies, appropriate the American writing, which British feminist publishers have made lavishly available, as part of a unified, international feminist cultural intervention? Not quite. It is true that the writing of Alice Walker, Marge Piercy and Ursula LeGuin and many other black and white women writers does point towards the development of a 'sustained critical, oppositional, revolutionary writing'. But it is only by ignoring both the specifically American political context of this work and diverse political and literary traditions that the achievement of black and white women writers can be seen either as having 'an unusual sense of cohesion' or as being 'first and most fundamentally the achievement of the women's movement'. Paul Gilroy (Letters 29 March) is of course perfectly correct in pointing to the traditions of black activism and writing that provides the inspiration and subject matter of Alice Walker's writing, a tradition and history brilliantly discussed in her book of essays *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (Women's Press, 1984). However popular her work has been with white audiences in the US and abroad, it speaks first to American blacks.

Both *Meridian* (1976) and *The Color Purple* are written out of her experience of black activism in the '60s and '70s; her 'womanism' comes both from her analysis of that experience and of painful dialogue with the white women's movement. This complex dialogue, with the shared political objectives of black activism including its specific forms of male chauvinism, with white society as a whole, and with white feminism in particular shapes the narrative, lyric and polemic of many other American black women writers.

In tracing the genesis of politically progressive literature by women, Mulhern has ignored a vital historical element in its emergence. It was the dynamic development of an explicitly political *black* literary culture in the 1950s and 1960s that explored the possibilities and set the agenda for a popular alternative cultural practice that broke down both the traditional boundaries of high culture and its apolitical, formalist post-war aesthetic. In my view it is that earlier cultural breakthrough (not least its publishing successes) and example by black writers that marks out one of the differences between our more modest indigenous feminist literary renaissance and the variety of the American achievement.

Finally, there is a disturbing political paradox to be considered when evaluating the 'utopian' writing that has come out of America in the late '70s and '80s. For while women's utopian fiction has appeared at other historical conjunctures and is in fact a *leitmotif* in women's writing, these particular imaginings of new societies followed from a general weakening and dispersal of libertarian, left, black and feminist political movements in the late '70s. As Mulhern notes, the question of transition to these brave new worlds is a problem in all the books he mentions. In *Women on the Edge of Time* the gesture towards change which closes the novel is an act of courageous but self-annihilating individual terrorism. In *The Color Purple* it is effected through a dialectic confined to a small familial community. The anti-realism of these texts, including *The Dispossessed*, masks a shared despair about and disillusionment with the possibilities of political change as a product of mass social and political movements, even as they articulate an inventive optimism about the possibilities of a revolutionized future. They reflect the difficulty of imagining collective struggle in the face of the massive hegemony of the Right in America, as well as the continued need for and capacity to think creatively and practically about the nature of transformed societies.

Although the retreat and fragmentation of progressive movements is common to both Britain and America in recent years, it is vital to keep in mind the differences as well as the similarities of our political cultures. Take two fundamental differences: 'socialism' is not yet a wholly utopian concept in Britain and we may still have the power to effect it, in part, through political means. But our socialist and our feminist cultures are still deeply lacking in their understanding of indigenous racism or the social and political aspirations of non-white Britons.

Utopian fictions, like other fiction, differ from culture to culture; the solutions they offer need to be read carefully in the light of the political contexts that produce them. That is why, although we do need the inspiration and innovatory ideas in these American writings, socialist feminists here in Britain cannot take credit for their emergence. Rather as we read them we should think about the differing conditions of their production, and our own urgent need to imagine and enact new forms of struggle and alliance — 'utopian' models, if you like of the processes of change as well as the detailed shapes of our own New Jerusalems.

Cora Kaplan

Cora Kaplan lectures at Sussex University.

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Christine Roche

Psalms

Jeanette Winterson

IF YOU'VE EVER tried to get a job as a tea-taster you will know as intimately as I do the nature of the preliminary questionnaire. It has all the usual things: height, weight, sex, hobbies new and old, curious personal defects, debilitating operations, over-long periods spent in the wrong countries. Fluency, currency, contacts, school tie. Fill them in, don't blob the ink and, if in doubt, be imaginative.

Then, on the last page, before you sign your name in a hand that is firm enough to show spirit, but not enough to show waywardness, there is a large empty space and a brief but meaningful demand.

You are to write about the experience you consider to have been the most significant in the formation of your character. (You may interpret 'character' as 'philosophy' if such is your inclination.) This is very shocking, because what we really want to talk about is that time we saw our older sister compromised behind the tool shed, or the time we very deliberately spat in the communion wine.

When I was small, I had a tortoise called Psalms. It was bought for me and named for me by my mother in an effort to remind me continually to praise the Lord. My mother had a horror of graven images, including crucifixes, but she felt there could be no harm in a tortoise. It moved slowly, so I could fully contemplate the wonders of creation in a way that would have been impossible with a ferret. It wasn't cuddly, so that I wouldn't be distracted as I might with a dog, and it had very little visible personality, so there was no possibility of us forming an intimate relationship as I might with a parrot. All in all, it seemed to her to be a satisfactory pet. I had been agitating for a pet for some time. In my head I had a white rabbit called Ezra that bit people who ignored me. Ezra's pelt was as white as the soul in heaven but his heart was black....

My mother drew me a picture of a tortoise so that I would not be too disappointed or too ecstatic. She hated emotion. I hoped that they came in different colours, which was not unreasonable since most animals do, and, when they were all clearly brown, I felt cheated.

'You can paint their shells,' comforted the man in the shop. 'Some people paint scenes on them. One chap I know has 26 and if you line 'em end to end in the right order you got the Flying Scotsman pulling into Edinburgh station.'

I asked my mother if I could have another twelve so that I could do a tableau of the last supper, but she said it was too expensive and might be a sin against the Holy Ghost.

'Why?' I demanded as the man left us arguing in front of the gerbils. 'God made the Holy Ghost, and he made these tortoises, they must know about each other.'

'I don't want the Lord and his disciples running round the garden on the backs of your tortoises. It's not respectful.'

'Yes, but when sinners come into the garden they'll be taken aback. They'll think it's the Lord sending them a vision.' (I imagined the heathen being confronted by more and more tortoises; they weren't to know I had thirteen, they'd think it was a special God-sent tortoise that could

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multiply itself.)

'No,' said my mother firmly. 'It's Graven Images, that's what. If the Lord wanted to appear on the backs of tortoises he'd have done it already.'

'Well can I just have two more then? I could do The Three Musketeers.'

'Heathen child,' my mother slapped me round the ears. 'This pet is to help you think about our Saviour. How can you do that if you've got The Three Musketeers staring up at you?'

THE MAN LOOKED sympathetic, but he didn't want to get involved so we packed up the one tortoise in a box with holes and went to catch the bus home. I was excited. Adam had named the animals, now I could name mine. 'How about The Man in the Iron Mask?' I suggested to my mother who was sitting in front of me reading her *Band of Hope Review*. She turned round sharply and gave a little screech.

'I've cricked my neck, what did you say?'

I said it again. 'We could call it Mim for short, but it looks like it's a prisoner doesn't it?'

'You are not calling that animal The Man in the Iron Mask, or anything for short, you can call it Psalms.'

'Why don't I call it Ebenezer?' (I was thinking that would match Ezra.)

'We're calling it Psalms because I want you to praise the Lord.'

'I can praise the Lord if it's called Ebenezer.'

'But you won't, will you? You'll say you forgot. What about the time I bought you that 3-D postcard of the garden of Gethsemane? You said that would help you think about the Lord and I caught you singing "On Ilkley Moor Baht 'at".'

'Alright then,' I sulked. 'We'll call it Psalms.'

So we did, and Psalms lived very quietly in a hutch at the bottom of the garden and every day I went and sat next to him and read him one of his namesakes out of the Bible. He was an attentive pet, never tried to run away or dig anything up, my mother spoke of his steadfastness with tears in her eyes. She felt convinced that Psalms was having a good effect on me. She enjoyed seeing us together. I never told her about Ezra the demon bunny, about his ears that filtered the sun on a warm day through a lattice of blood vessels reminiscent of orchids. Ezra the avenger didn't like Psalms and sometimes stole his lettuce.

When my mother decided it was time for us to go on holiday to Llandudno she was determined to take Psalms with us.

'I don't want you being distracted by Pleasure,' she explained. 'Not now that you're doing so well.'

I was doing well; I knew huge chunks of the Bible by heart and won all the competitions in Sunday School. Most importantly, for an evangelical, I was singing more, which you do, inevitably, when you're learning Psalms. On the train my mother supplied me with pen and paper and told me to make as many separate words as I could out of Jerusalem. My father was dispatched for coffee and she read out loud interesting snippets from her new paperback, *Portents of the Second Coming*.

I wasn't listening; practice enabled me to pour out the variations on Jerusalem without even thinking. Words slot into each other easily enough once sense ceases to be primary. Words become patterns and shapes. Tennyson, drunk on filthy sherry one evening, said he knew the value of every word in the language, except possibly 'scissors'. By value he meant resonance and fluidity, not sense. So while my mother warned me of the forthcoming apocalypse I stared out of the window and imagined that I was old enough to buy my own Rail Rover ticket and go off round the world with only a knapsack and a penknife and a white rabbit. A white rabbit? I jumped a little at this intrusion into my daydream. Ezra's pink eyes were gleaming down at me from the frayed luggage rack. Ezra wasn't invited on this trip, I had been determined to control him and make him stay behind. In the box next to me I felt Psalms fidgeting. My mother was oblivious.

'Just think,' she said enthusiastically. 'When the Lord comes back the lion will lie down with the lamb.'

But will the rabbit come to terms with the tortoise?

Like Psalms, I was feeling nervous, as one would when one's fantasy life gets out of control. Ezra's eyes bored into my soul and my own black heart. I felt transparent, the way I do now when I meet a radical feminist who can always tell that I shave my armpits and have a penchant for silk stockings.

'I'm trying to be good,' I hissed. 'Go away.'

'Yes,' continued my mother, all unknowing. 'We'll live naturally when the Lord comes back, there'll be no chemicals or aerosol deodorants. No fornicating or electric guitars.' She looked up sharply at my father. 'Did you put saccharine in this coffee? You know I can't drink it without.' My father smiled sheepishly and tried to placate her with a packet of Bourbons, which was a mistake because she hated anything that sounded foreign. I remembered how it had been when my auntie had come back from Italy and insisted on having us round for pasta. My mother was suspicious and kept turning it over with her fork and saying how much she liked hot pot and carrots. She didn't mind natives so much or people who lived in the jungle and other hot places because she felt they couldn't help it. Europe, though, was close enough to Britain to behave properly and, in not behaving properly, was clearly perverse and due to be rolled up when the Lord came back. (In the Eternal City there will be no pasta.)

I TRIED TO DISTRACT myself from her gathering storm by concentrating on the notices in our carriage. I took in the exhortation to leave the train clean and tidy and felt suitably awed by the dire warnings against frivolously pulling the communication cord. Ezra began to chew it. Tired and emotional, though fondly imagining we shared a common ground other than the one we were standing on, we reached our boarding house at nightfall and spent the holiday in various ways. One morning my mother suggested we take Psalms with us to the beach.

'He'll enjoy a change of air.'

I hadn't seen Ezra for a couple of days otherwise I might have been more alive to the possibilities of catastrophe. We set off, found a patch that wasn't too windy, said a prayer and my father fell asleep. Psalms seemed comforted by the sand beneath his feet and very slowly dug a very small hole.

'Why don't you take him to that rock in the breakers?' My mother pointed. 'He won't have seen the sea before.' I nodded, and picked him up pretending I was Long John Silver making off with booty. As we sat on the rock sunning ourselves a group of boys came splashing through the waves, one of them holding a bow and arrow. Before my eyes he strung the bow and fired at Psalms. It was a direct hit in the centre of the shell. This was of no matter in itself because the arrow was rubber-tipped and made no impression on the shell. It did make an impression on Psalms, though, who became hysterical and standing on his back legs toppled over into the sea. I lunged down to pick him out but I couldn't distinguish between tortoise and rocks. If only my mother had let me make him into one of the The Three Musketeers I could have saved him from a watery grave. He was lost. Dead. Drowned. I thought of Shelley.

'Psalms has been killed,' I told my mother flatly.

We spent all afternoon with a shrimping net trying to find his corpse, but we couldn't and at six o'clock my mother said she had to have some fish and chips. It was a gloomy funeral supper and all I could see was Ezra the demon bunny hopping up and down on the prom. If it had not been for my father's devotion and perseverance in whistling tunes from the war in a loud and lively manner we might never have recovered our spirits. As it was, my mother suddenly joined in with the words, patted me on the head and said it must have been the Lord's will. Psalms's time was up, which was surely a sign that I should move onto another book of the Bible.

'We could go straight onto Proverbs,'

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she said. 'What kind of pet would be proverbial?'

'What about a snake?'

'No,' she refused, shaking her head. 'Snakes are wily, not wise.'

'What about an owl?'

'I don't want an owl in my room. Owls are very demanding and besides when your Uncle Bert parachuted into the canal by mistake, it was an owl I saw just before I got the telegram.'

Death by water seemed to be a feature of our family, so why not have something that was perpetually drowned? 'Let's get some fish, they're proverbial, and they'll be quiet like Psalms was, and they'll remind us of the Flood and our own mortality.' My mother was very taken with this, especially since she had just eaten a fine piece of cod. She liked it when she could experience the Bible in different ways.

As for me, I was confronted with my own black heart. You can bury what you like but, if it's still alive when you bury it, don't look for a quiet life. Is this what the tea board wants to know about? Is it hoping to read of tortoises called Psalms?

I don't believe it. They must have an identikit picture of what constitutes a suitable forming experience, like playing quarterback in the school team and beating Wales, or saving a rare colony of worker bees from extinction.

My mother bought some brown ink in Llandudno and sketched Psalms on a few square inches of stiff card. She caught his expression very well, though I still feel the burden of being the only person who has ever seen what emotion a tortoise can express when about to drown. Such things are sobering and stretch down the years. I could have saved him, but I felt he limited my life. Sometimes I take out the sketch and stare at his mournful face. He was always mournful, though I think that was a characteristic of the breed because I have never met a jubilant tortoise. On the other hand, perhaps I never made him happy. Perhaps we were at emotional odds like Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler. Perhaps a briny end was better than a gradual neglect. I ponder these things in my heart. My mother, always philosophical in her own way, enjoyed a steady stream of biblical pets: the Proverbial fish, Ecclesiast the hen who never laid an egg where we could find it, Solomon the Scotch terrier and, finally, Isaiah and Jeremiah, a pair of goats who lived to a great age and died peacefully in their pen.

'You can always depend on the prophets,' declared my mother whenever anyone marvelled at the longevity of her goats. The world was a looking glass for the Lord — she saw him in everything. Though I do warn her, from time to time, never to judge a bunny by its pelt. . . . □

Jeanette Winterson's first novel Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit *was published by Pandora last month.*

Keeping faith

Rupert Christiansen

Selected Letters of E. M. Forster
Volume Two 1921-1970
ed. MARY LAGO and P. N. FURBANK
Collins £17.50

IN THE WAKE of P. N. Furbank's eclipsing biography, the first volume of Forster's letters (published in 1983) came as something of a disappointment. The dominating tone was suburban, cosy, whimsical, with that characteristic Forsterian perspective, the 'slight angle to the universe', too often flattened by the

Richard Willson

stifling presence of a cabal of female relations. There was almost nothing about the creative process of the novelist and little biographical evidence not already uncovered by Furbank.

This second volume certainly has more patches of interest and even of energy, but the overriding impression is of a correspondent too honest and diffident to rank with a Byron or Flaubert — Forster was temperamentally unable to show off to his friends or write letters with one eye to posterity. What the persevering reader gets instead (apart from some excellent annotation and a few pages of badly reproduced photographs) is a renewed sense of Forster's tenacious moral and intellectual consistency. In a century full of *trahison de clercs*, he was one of the few who kept his nerve and his old friends.

The book opens with Forster in the middle of *A Passage to India*, working as the nominal secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas. India amused and confused him. He felt he had lost the power to 'join it up', to make sense of it; all he had was a 'cloud of little thoughts'. This was not simply political frustration — it extended into his aesthetics. 'I am bored not only by my creative incompetence, but by the tiresomeness and conventionalities of fiction-form,' he wrote: 'if you can pretend to get inside one character, why not pretend it about all the characters?. . . The studied ignorance of the novelists grows wearisome'. Proust impressed him as showing a way out, and he was intrigued by Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*: 'You have clean cut away all the difficulties that so bother me. . .all those Blue Books of the interior and exterior life of the various characters — their spiritual development, income, social positions etc.' But it was not an emancipation he could achieve himself, and the much-debated 'drying up' after *A Passage to India* can to some extent be attributed to the impasse in which the challenge of modernism left him stranded. By 1927 he was blaming his silence on the 'simple lack of the co-ordinating power that Ibsen had'.

In the Thirties he sublimated his 'creative impotence' in a busy career as a public voice, essayist and critic (the parallel with Coleridge is an interesting one). He wrote leaders for *Time and Tide* and articles for the *New Statesman*, became the first president of the NCCL, and aligned himself firmly with the anti-fascist wing of the intelligentsia. The world of Bloomsbury irritated him increasingly — 'their inquisitiveness never had any spunk, that is why one loathes it so' he snapped in 1931 — and the ensuing years throw up some marvellously acerbic judgments of Virginia Woolf (one could do with more of this kind of sharpness). There are some graceful and lively letters to Christopher Isherwood, but the darkening over Europe oppressed him with another wave of helplessness, and in 1938 he told C. Day-Lewis that he 'can see no way out of our dilemma. Either we yield to the Nazis or they subdue us. *Or* we stand up to them, come to resemble them in the process, are subdued to them that way.'

When war came he carried on resolutely, nagging away at the pettiness of domestic censorship, listening hard to Beethoven's piano sonatas and thinking about his friends. His principles did not change. What he wrote to Arthur Koestler in 1941 — 'it is the crushing of the human spirit *from within* which is so terrible' — could equally have been written in 1911 or 1961.

The post-war Forster, revered and visited, settled down in the cocoon of King's College, Cambridge. The letters of this last epoch of his life are generally dull — he was, after all, now an old man who wanted to be comfortable. No fresh light is cast on his mysterious relationship with the policeman Bob Buckingham, whose wife May cuts such a powerful figure in Forster's biography. There are the odd flickers of creative excitement as he revises his homosexual short stories or contributes to the portentous libretto for Britten's opera *Billy Budd*, but otherwise he fades quietly into senility.

Yet for all the fussiness and physical decay, there remained a strong sense of inner life, of the Forsterian disgust at cruelty, crudity and what he once called 'celestial pom-pomming'. Even in his mid-eighties, he can still isolate the bluntness of thinking in a speech of Noel Annan's calling for the expansion of higher

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education and experience a revelation of 'uninterrupted communication' with the alabaster figures on a tomb in a country church.

'It is the betrayal from within that wears away one's soul and I have been spared that', he once wrote. For all that they lack in brio, these letters show how profoundly the claim stands up. □

Anything to declare?

Justin Wintle

The Oxford Companion to English Literature
ed. MARGARET DRABBLE *Oxford* £15

COMPILING a reference book is horribly like preparing to go abroad. There is so much you want to take with you, and so little space to put it in. Bouts of optimism alternate with spasms of ruthlessness. Especially you are aware that where you are going there are various people all of whom expect presents, and it is the more bulky items that are often the least valuable. What's to be done? Eventually a balance is struck between what is essential and what will give your journey a semblance of individuality. And then? And then the analogy shatters. When your valise arrives at the other end and you think you've cleared the customs hall a particularly stern official grabs you by the arm and tells you to open up. The trouble is, though, it's not the things that you have packed which most seize his attention. It's the things that you haven't packed.

Margaret Drabble has taken a holiday from writing novels, and here she is, effecting an exit from Passport Control and dragging behind her *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, the fifth edition, no less.

At first the customs official is caught off-guard. He's seen the case several times before, he knows what will be in it and he is about to turn his attention to someone else's luggage when he notices it's a good 200 pages bigger than the *Companion* he's used to seeing. Lifting his tired eyes he beholds that the passenger too has undergone a transformation. Where he had expected to see the familiar figure of Sir Paul, he finds instead Ms Drabble.

'Excuse me, madam, I'd like a look if you don't mind.'

The lady sighs, and heaves the *Companion* on to his bench. As she struggles with the locks the official asks if it really is her case, to which, already a little flustered, she replies well yes, it is. 'I inherited it from Harvey.'

The locks snap open with a vengeance, and because the case is an expander several oddments tumble immediately upon the official's shiny shoes.

'What's this?' he asks, picking one up.

'That?' says the lady. 'Oh that. That's just a Bradbury. And that one's a Lodge. They're both contemporary novelists.'

'Indeed! Then I expect you've got an Amis and a Rushdie in here as well, madam?'

'A Kingsley Amis? Good heavens yes.'

'I was thinking of a Martin Amis actually.'

'Too bad. You see, I only had room for people born in or before 1939.'

'So I suppose you've 'forgotten' to bring a Brenton with you?'

'Yes and no.' The woman pauses. 'As it happens, Brenton is mentioned under English Stage Company.'

'Quite so. But Caryl Churchill gets an entry all of her own, so why not Brenton?'

'I told you why. Churchill was born in 1938.'

'Oh I see.'

It is now the official's turn to sigh. He's certainly going to have his work cut out with this one.

'Don't you think it was a little thoughtless to draw the line at 39?'

Camera Press

Margaret Drabble: clearing customs

At this point Ms Drabble purses her lips. If the man wants to sneer then let him. He can search all through the Introduction and still he won't find the information he's after. And she's damned if she's going to tell him. Damned too if she's going to own to the fact that 1939 was also the year when she was born.

'Tut tut. Here's another thirty-niner. You've packed some Beatles though. Now we know which side of the fence they were born on don't we? No contraband Stones though. I suppose then I should expect to find a Richard Adams in here. What? No Adams? A Le Carré instead. Then where's your Deighton? And no Vidal among all these Americans?'

And he's away. Every tranche of literature he pulls out of the woman's trunk seems just another excuse for his workaday scoffing. 'Great Scott!' he exclaims. 'Just what are these? Structuralism *and* futurism? Now don't tell me you bought these in England, missie. I like this though. The Spasmodic School. I'd forgotten all about that. And let's take a sniff inside this bottle of MacNeice shall we? An *outstanding writer*, you call him, of *radio parable plays*. Now there are a couple of radio playwrights you could have squeezed in here if you'd followed your nose. Giles Cooper, I mean, and the delectable Don Haworth.'

Clearly the official has decided he will have to sort through everything. Deftly he sifts through plot summaries, authors, endless authors, their endless works, the clubs, the societies, the publishers, the journals. Not enough of these, he keeps saying to himself, too many of these he mutters. He lingers over a long article on Andrej Bely, and he lingers unconscionably over an even longer article on Henry St John Bolingbroke.

'Why look!' he splutters. 'This Bolingbroke of yours is twice the length of your Boswell. Though I must say I'm pleased you've taken the precaution of bringing plenty of Browning with you. There's no knowing when *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon* may not come in handy.'

The man begins to share the passenger's consternation. His face becomes a battleground between somewhat forced expressions of approval and vehement grimaces of distaste. Like most customs officials he detests foreigners, and for the life of him he cannot see why Ms Drabble has squashed so many beneath her English umbrella. But then, when he sees how her Hughes is marked with the sign of the laureate, he smiles. How very up-to-date, he thinks. A moment later the smile vanishes however. He picks up her *New Statesman* and when he sees that it is still edited by Bruce Page he fairly fumes.

He takes more kindly though to the many women he finds. An initial oath ('Damned Viragos!') gives way to gentler reproaches: 'No, no, I see your point, I see your point.'

At last the official is more amiably disposed than Ms Drabble could originally have dared to hope. He taps the empty case and together they repack her belongings.

'You're missing a Durrell,' he says, as he helps her fold Lawrence in between a Durkheim and a Dürrenmatt. 'But never mind, you probably won't need either of them if the forecast's accurate. A word of advice though. If you come this way again you might consider rephrasing your label.'

'How so?'

'Perhaps the *Hampstead Companion*...?'

The ire rises in our traveller, but, sensing she might be delayed further, she suppresses it with an almost matronly laugh.

'Oh these literary types,' the official moans to a younger colleague (an apprentice customsman) after she has gone. 'Take that one for example. Half the stuff in her case shouldn't have been there in the first place. English literature, my fanny!'

'She got past you all right though.'

'That's what I mean. They'd beguile the pants off the Statue of Liberty if they had to.'

'Perhaps she just wanted to show off how travelled she is.'

'Then she should get hold of a proper Groves, not a measly little Companion hold-all.'

And then:

'It's the aura of the thing that foxed me, the aura of an Oxford Companion. The concretion of the well-known, the half-known and the never-known. The importance attached to the trivial, and the compactness of the important. The regularity of the A-Z, and the sheer, wanton eruptions of prejudice and taste.'

'In short, Jack, the appositeness of the word itself. Oxford.'

'Or Hampstead.'

But the younger official did not understand this last remark, if indeed he even heard it. Already his eyes were staring through the huge airport windows at the female figure struggling with her bag toward the taxi-rank beyond.

Next time she passed through, he resolved, he was determined to have a look at her things for himself. From what he'd just been told he could easily surmise that this Ms Drabble had done her packing every inch as well as old Harvey himself. □

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With caution

Steven Rose

Reshaping Life: Key Issues in Genetic Engineering
G.V.J. NOSSAL *Cambridge* £6.95
Setting Genes to Work: The Industrial Era of Biotechnology
STEPHANIE YANCHINSKI *Viking* £12.95
The Gene Factory: Inside the Biotechnology Business
JOHN ELKINGTON *Century* £12.95

THE PEAK OF the media hype for biotechnology, in the late Seventies, saw what bids fair to be the fastest accumulation of paper fortunes by shareholders in the new companies since the South Sea Bubble. Enthusiasm for the wondrous potential of genetic engineering, from trees which grow pork chops to miracle cures for cancer and limitless petroleum substitutes from plant wastes, knew no bounds. Molecular biologists tumbled over one another out of university laboratories on to the boards of directors of the new companies. The zeroes after the pound and dollar signs multiplied; ICI invested £100 million in a factory in which bacteria would turn methanol into protein; the US market for biotechnology, some $25 million in the early 1980s, was estimated to reach anything up to $27 *billion* by the 1990s.

It wasn't long before the bubble began, if not to burst, then certainly to deflate. Several years after they were set up, few of the new biotechnology companies could yet show a profit. ICI's investment in its protein plant was written off; there were several well-publicised bankruptcies. The wonder chemicals like interferon (the potential cancer cure) and human insulin (to replace the old-fashioned stuff that is extracted from slaughterhouse material) proved to have unexpected complications.

We are now in a third, more cautious phase. There *are* new products, though relatively unglamorous — like enzymes to clean up sewage, and diagnostic kits for detecting biochemically specific diseases. Meanwhile other firms specialising in biotechnological information have begun to sprout and finally the books *about* biotechnology for the non-specialist, which are now multiplying as fast as — well perhaps not the common gut bug *E. Coli*, on which much biotechnology depends — but at least rabbits.

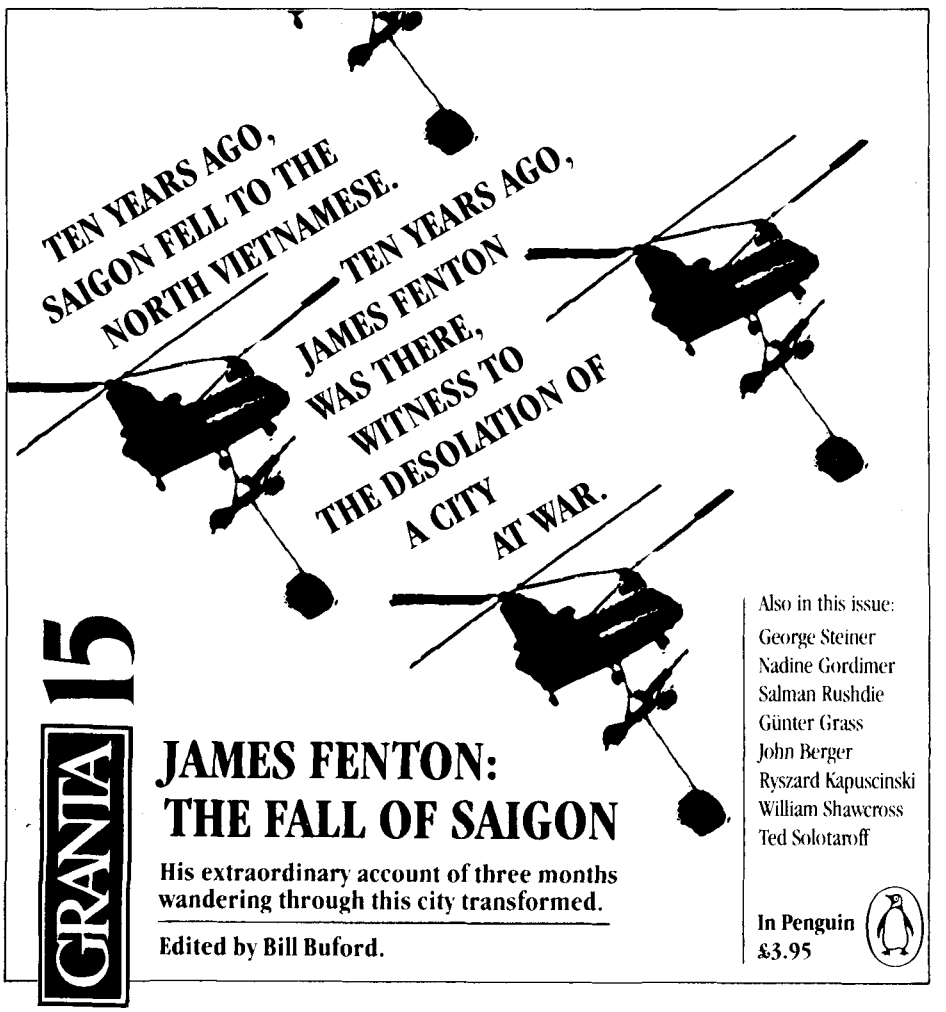
The three books reviewed here are a fair sample of the many now available. One is by a distinguished Australian immunologist and science administrator, one by a science journalist and the third by the editor of *Biotechnology Bulletin*. Any book on biotechnology has to do three things. First, it must describe the basic features of the science and technology involved in recombinant DNA, cloning, fermentation and the rest. Second, it has to review something of the past history and present prospects of the new biotechnologically engineered products. And third, it must explore some of the commercial, political and ethical issues surrounding the exploitation of the new techniques. If, at the same time, it can convey some of the spirit of intense scientific excitement, competition and moral debate within which molecular biology has been embroiled over the last decade, it should succeed well.

Immunologist Gus Nossal is the best of the three, as one might expect, on the science — helped by the fact that he is not directly working in the area himself, so it is easier for him to see the wood from the trees. If you know no biology at all, my guess is it will still be tough, but Nossal's diagrams are clear and his pace brisk; by a third of the way through his 158 pages he can begin to turn to what the biotechnologists are up to: making synthetic hormones and new vaccines; developing techniques for gene therapy and opening the way for a second 'green revolution' with perhaps a little of the humility learned from the failure of the first. Finally, Nossal runs us through the birth of the new industries, problems of public policy and of scientists playing god. He plays down the hazards which many have feared from the unrestrained growth of biotechnology and, indeed, glosses over its relative lack of success to date and ends on the optimistic and humane edge of the conventional wisdom.

Stephanie Yanchinski, though trained as a biochemist, now works as a *New Scientist* journalist. She disposes of the science of biotechnology in a mere 18 pages as she moves on to recount the tale of the rise, faltering and partial recovery of the biotechnology companies, with a quick nod at the end to the moral issues and the need for public involvement in the choice of technological futures. It's a competently done account if you don't mind the repeated falling back on the journalistic trick of livening its text by finding an acceptable adjective to describe each of the gentlemen whose work you discuss, from 'cloistered monk' Gregor Mendel to 'wiry' Argentinian exile Cesar Milstein, whose discovery of methods for producing monoclonal antibodies at Cambridge was rewarded with last year's Nobel prize.

The tales Yanchinski tells reappear in the least satisfactory of these books, John Elkington's *The Gene Factory*. This is very much a personalised account of the author's visits to — I make it — three continents' worth of biotechnology companies, peppered with quotes from their managing directors or leading researchers. Despite being half as big again as the other two books, its account of the science of biotechnology is inconsequential and would, I suspect, be incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Its gossipy style is hard to follow, but it does have some shrewd comments on the marketing problems which the new companies have faced and charts some of their difficulties. However, there are a number of more-or-less trivial errors in the book which make one less easy about it as an information source than either Yanchinski's or Nossal's.

The last time I reviewed a biotechnology book for the *NS*, I concluded that the best introduction to the field was Ed Yoxen's *The Gene Business* (Pan, 1983). Despite the present batch, I think that's still true. □


TEN YEARS AGO, SAIGON FELL TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE.
TEN YEARS AGO, JAMES FENTON WAS THERE, WITNESS TO THE DESOLATION OF A CITY AT WAR.
GRANTA 15
JAMES FENTON: THE FALL OF SAIGON
His extraordinary account of three months wandering through this city transformed.
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FICTION

Leaving home

Liz Heron

No Mate for the Magpie
FRANCES MOLLOY *Virago* £7.95 & £3.50
Secret Villages
DOUGLAS DUNN *Faber* £8.95
The March of the Musicians
PER OLOV ENQUIST *Collins* £8.95
After the Divorce
GRAZIA DELEDDA *Quartet Encounter* £4.95

ON THE frontispiece of **No Mate for the Magpie** there's a quotation from Yeats's 'Remorse for Intemperate Speech':

> Out of Ireland have we come.
> Great hatred, little room,
> Maimed us at the start.
> I carry from my mother's womb
> A fanatic heart.

This is an extraordinarily impressive first novel by Frances Molloy. What it owes to the time-honoured traditions of Irish story-telling it repays in modern coin. All the sorrow and anger beating in that fanatic heart of historical legacy is intimated in a riotous tragi-comedy, resolutely picaresque in form and written in the idiom of urban working-class speech as it is spoken in the North of Ireland — a remarkable achievement of linguistic inventiveness and stylistic skill.

The distorting mirror of comic hyperbole bends what are clearly autobiographical elements into a portrait of individual progress that reflects its background as both monstrous and absurd. Ann Elizabeth McGlone is born into a Catholic family in the North; it's 1947, the family grows; there's poverty and erratic schooling, family fisticuffs and sectarian squabbles; da in Crumlin Road jail for four years as an IRA suspect on no charge. At 15 there's a factory job, then a spell as a nun, ECT in a mental hospital, Derry, Dublin, gruesome landladies and bloody civil rights marches; and final, weary surrender to emigration.

Episode is piled on episode at a wild energetic pace, and things always go from bad to worse. But the bigotry and small-mindedness that outface Ann Elizabeth at every turn are observed with such mischievous sharpness and savage irony that there's hardly time to take in the full grotesqueness of it all before laughter takes over. Like the narrative, she moves ever onwards, resilient and with frantic ingenuity, even exacting small measures of revenge as her story winds to a close. What more fitting novelistic model for the fortunes of a woman coming of age in post-war Ireland than that shaped by an 18th-century Europe still struggling to enter a new phase of history?

English readers may take a page or two to ease into the language of this novel. As a native of Glasgow, whose vernacular is not dissimilar, I had a distinct advantage. This particular personal perspective certainly contributed to my sense of something missing in Douglas Dunn's **Secret Villages**, stories set mainly in the West of Scotland. These are quiet, laconic observations of character and local mores, disturbed only by flickerings of poignant recognition or gentle mockery. They have all the qualities of fine poetic economy, but are so subdued as to appear written out of memory, with just a hint of complacency in their distance. They depend on a sense of place, but much more narrowly than in the work of that group of West of Scotland writers, among whom Alasdair Gray is the best known, who have given the politics of literary geography a new cutting edge.

The random manner in which foreign writing reaches us in translation is the plainest instance of how our knowledge of literature and the worlds it represents are circumscribed by Anglo-centrism. Per Olov Enquist's **The March of the Musicians** arrives preceded by French, German and Spanish editions, though still ahead of much good writing that remains inaccessible to readers in this country. **After the Divorce**, the first novel by Nobel prize winner Grazia Deledda, was first published in 1902. It comes via Quartet's new imprint, a series of 20th-century classics in translation, intended to close some of the glaring gaps in what is available.

Both these books look at consciousness and action moving against the grain of isolated communities locked into rigid social and moral frameworks, though at two geographical extremes. *After the Divorce* takes place in the remote mountainous area of Sardinia famed for its banditry, and is a distinguished example of the regional literature that Deledda was determined to play a part in creating. The landscape, with its harsh, desolate beauty, is as much soulful protagonist as setting. It both echoes the wilder impulses of its shepherds and peasants and offers the solace of physical freedom, itself an ambiguous state in a story of a young man's wrongful imprisonment for murder and the reluctant remarriage of his wife to the son of a miserly landowning widow. The characters feel and suffer with the stern intensity of classical tragedy, yet their claustrophobic passions, enacted within the uneasy coincidence of prohibitions and prescriptions that ancient customs, modern laws and the tenets of Catholicism lay down at the turn of the century, embody the tensions of social and material change.

There is little apparent optimism in the book's conclusion, 'yet it is in the struggle itself that the cause of optimism lies', as Sheila MacLeod notes in her useful introduction.

Elegy for two students I did not know

James Simmons

Adventuring down on the rocks after a disco —
power is fascinating — two students risked the waves,
and that foam-robed Vice Chancellor in rut,
en route, drunk as a lord, laughing, roaring
in his own wild career, jostled them.
Slave of the winds that blow, who
he was taking in he did not know.

Children, whatever your plans were or queries,
affairs of love or learning, your nice quirks
of personality, over them great salaries
and golden handshakes pour coldly, coldly.

Children, is this not what they told you?
What were you learning from literature and science?
You ought to have listened harder to make sense
of our solemn mouthings, grasped our indifference.

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This commentary is equally apposite for Enquist's novel. Its setting is Norrland, the inhospitable coastal regions of northern Sweden, where, for timber-mill workers in the early 1900s, everyday life is marked by the rigours of hell-fire Lutheranism and a desperate poverty, adherence to the one engendering a deep conservatism which stands in the way of fighting the other. What lifts *The March of the Musicians* well above the level of a worthy documentary fiction drawn from the annals of Swedish labour history, is its concern to invoke historical continuities: to see the past not as closed off from the present, but as always flowing towards it, even where the connections seem most tenuous.

The layered narrative slips across the years that separate the boy Nicanor's first encounter in 1903 with Elmblad, the socialist organiser from Stockholm, to just after Nicanor's death in 1973. It twists backwards and forwards into different pockets of time, but always returning to the first two decades of this century and the lives of Nicanor's family and other Norrlanders. There are no heroes, least of all the ulcer-prone Elmblad, jaundiced by years of suspicion and ritual beatings and sick-at-heart with the workers he seeks to unionise. There are strikes but no victories, defeat, despair and hopeless deprivation. Yet this is a moving and sometimes achingly funny book, resonant with the knowledge that even the frailest, most crushed spirits resist the unjust reasons of their time. □

Unsupported

Dave Cook

Menlove: The Life of John Menlove Edwards
JIM PERRIN *Gollancz* £14.95

JOHN MENLOVE EDWARDS was the greatest of pre-war English rock-climbing pioneers. North Wales is full of impressive climbs that testify to his skill and daring in scaling steep and loose cliffs without the safety of modern equipment. In a highly literate sport, his articles and poems stand out for their evocative power.

His climbing exploits were matched by a series of desperately dangerous adventures on water, all carried out without fuss or publicity. He swam the Linn of Dee when it bulged with snow melt and rowed single-handed across the Minch to the Outer Hebrides one stormy December.

Thus far an account of Menlove's achievements fits, indeed confirms, the stereotype of masculinity that dominates climbing and I suspect all sports. Courage, strength, dedication, athleticism, he had them all. He was also homosexual, and to this day the climbing world has maintained an uneasy silence about this. What makes Jim Perrin's biography so compelling is his description of the destructive conflict between Menlove's devastating honesty about all things including his sexuality, and the inability of those around him to reciprocate and to understand. It is the epic quality of that conflict that is likely to make the book of interest far beyond the ranks of the climbing and outdoor world.

He was brought up in a strong Christian socialist tradition (his sister married Hewlett Johnson, the 'Red Dean' of Canterbury). This background, in his words 'born the fourth and last child of two overworked parents at a country vicarage on flat, black soil', then Liverpool University and a career as a clinical psychiatrist, struck a jarring note with the relaxed gentility of the upper-class climbing world of the 1930s.

More rejections were to come. His contemporaries could cope with this, for the time, unusual pedigree, but in a world where stereotypes, like the cliffs, fill the sky, Menlove's sexuality was more of a problem. 'But he was the strongest man I knew', the disbelieving response of one older climber to the book, would have no doubt been a common, and fairly classic, reaction.

A previous tribute, 'Samson', written 25 years ago by two contemporaries, Wilfred Noyce and Geoffrey Sutton, dodged the issue, even though, as Perrin describes, there had been a passionate love affair between Menlove and Noyce in 1936. Ironically Menlove's finest piece of writing, long regarded as one of climbing literature's seminal texts, is shown in the book to be a personal and social allegory about Menlove's rejection by Noyce and to be only incidentally about the sport.

Yet Menlove, who had to contend both with a hostile society and coping with his homosexuality within the framework of his religious beliefs, allowed himself no such silences or compromises. One of the questions I found myself being forced to ask is what is the cost of such indifference from those around them to people who are striving to come to terms with their innermost feelings? Or perhaps, to put it in another way, how little do we know even about our best friends?

For Menlove the cost was very high. At work there were accolades for his practical therapy, but his theoretical writings, which he regarded as the main achievement of his life, met with total rejection. (None of his psychiatric writing has survived so Perrin is unable to give any real estimation of what was involved in this.) Then came the war. Menlove was a conscientious objector, increasing his isolation from the mood and activity of the times.

The final section describes in harrowing detail, illustrated by increasingly disjointed and accusatory extracts from letters, climbing hut journals and articles, the slide into further isolation, and then schizophrenia. The process is uneven, broken occasionally by bouts of high standard climbing and attempts by his friends and family to help. By now though rock climbing did not provide the haven of a simplified reality that it had done in earlier years. The slide ended in suicide in 1958.

That Menlove could maintain his unrelenting, honest and sensitive commitment without fulfilling relationships, the support of a gay movement or understanding from his friends is what makes the story so inspiring. Not the least of the virtues of this riveting book is that it forces the reader to think of a world where the story might have ended differently. □

In practice

Frank Field

Poor Britain
JOANNA MACK and STEWART LANSLEY
Allen & Unwin £15 & £5.95

THE LAST THING the poor need is another book about the horrors of poverty. My guess is that their test of the usefulness of the output of the poverty lobby is if it helps them get more money. On this criterion the second half of *Poor Britain* scores well.

The book derives from the TV series *Poor Britain* for which MORI carried out what the authors claim to be a major survey on living standards. The results occupy the book's first half. Here we can learn about what the authors call the extent of deprivation and how they measure poverty. The survey shows that over 90 per cent of respondents believe that a warm, damp-free home, an inside lavatory, a bath not shared by another family and a bed for everybody to sleep in are necessities. More than two-thirds of the respondents classified 12 items as necessities. Of the poorest 10 per cent over half cannot afford at least two of these necessities, over a third cannot afford four or more and over a fifth cannot afford six or more.

The real problem comes when one tries to

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move from such survey data to construct a political programme which can win at the polls and this is the concern of the book's second half. Most people when asked what they think of as necessities will give a personal response as to what they regard as necessities for themselves. But it is, sadly, one thing to express views about the minimum tolerable for those at the bottom of the heap; it is quite another to go on and pledge financial support for a redistributionary programme which will allow others to enjoy a standard of living almost equal to one's own and for which one is asked to pay.

This is a crunch question for radical politics. Whatever the numbers of poor, Mrs Thatcher knows that they are a minority and unashamedly bids for support among the majority who are not poor. How does the Left begin to devise a strategy to help the poor which can at one and the same time appeal to enough of the electorate which all too clearly isn't poor?

Poor Britain measures the support the electorate may be prepared to give in pounds and pence to a programme which gives the poor what they need most — more money. Table 9.13 on page 258 is the most important in the book. It asks how many voters would support a 1p and a 5p increase in tax in order 'to enable everyone to afford the items you have said are necessities'. 74 per cent support a penny increase while 20 per cent oppose and 6 per cent say they don't know. By the same token only 34 per cent of the electorate would support a 5p increase in tax.

These totals are broken down by social class, sex and political affiliation. There are some surprises. More males than females support a 1p increase in income tax; so too do marginally more Conservative than Labour voters. This position is different, however, when one comes to an additional 5p levy; 40 per cent of Labour supporters (perhaps one should say *only* 40 per cent) give their assent compared to 30 per cent of Tory voters. So the survey shows all-party support for a modest programme of redistribution — but it is very modest. How can radicals build on this limited support for a major attack on poverty?

The survey shows that 66 per cent of the electorate believe the Government should introduce a minimum wage for all workers. Support for this is highest among Alliance voters. Significantly, the SDP leaders are opposed to such a move although 80 per cent of their supporters agree with this reform. So do 68 per cent of Labour voters and, surprisingly perhaps, 62 per cent of Mrs T's supporters. Leaving aside this level of support, a minimum wage might appeal to the next Labour Government as its cost will not appear directly in the total of government expenditure.

A minimum wage is crucial for laying the basis of an effective anti-poverty programme. But on this the Left has got to come clean and face up to some difficult decisions. A successful minimum wage strategy, for example, entails the erosion of differentials. It is also of little use if the increase is clawed back in tax and national insurance payments. How can major changes be made in the tax threshold (i.e. the point at which people begin to pay tax)? Again there is almost no room for manoeuvre unless a government is prepared to do something about all those tax allowances or benefits which already exempt over half of all personal income from tax.

A policy of placing a ceiling on all non-personal tax benefits, such as mortgage interest relief, pension concessions and the like, could lead to a massive increase in the amount of extra revenue raised during the life of a Parliament, and particularly towards its end and as the election comes into focus. Some politicians say that such a policy is bound to lose votes, and on this crucial question *Poor Britain* is silent. But is such an approach a natural vote loser?

If Labour was committed to such a strategy, setting out the extra revenue which would be raised each year, and describing how this would be committed to raising the tax threshold, cutting the rates of tax, and remodelling the welfare state, would this not appeal to a wide band of voters? Such a libertarian policy based on more money in the wage packet, rather than tax reliefs, could be attractive. A welfare state which aims to establish a minimum floor on which people can build by their own efforts — rather than the present poverty trap — could strike a similar note. The survey evidence from *Poor Britain* shows that there is support for the goal of such a policy. Moreover, the poor's needs would be seen as part of a wider reforming programme, and it is in this kind of programme that their chance of a new deal lies. □

On telly

Tony Beeton

Television Mythologies
ed. LEN MASTERMAN *Comedia* £10.50 & £3.95

HOW, ROLAND Barthes once asked, can we read criticism? It is an especially difficult question to answer when the criticism is gathered into a book conceived partly as a homage to a critic — to Barthes himself.

Reading Barthes' *Mythologies* for the first time some 12 years ago was a shattering experience. It was like having successive layers of skin peeled away from one's eyes to reveal a world made dramatically transparent, the creation of women and men, full of meanings where only ordinariness and the taken-for-granted had been before. The layers, myths, were a kind of language or code which obscured the ideological determination of our everyday life by presenting it as natural, as given or, to use Barthes' own word, as doxa. The essays in *Mythologies* were written in the Fifties and set a fashion for cultural criticism. So much so that Barthes commented (at just the time the collection made its belated appearance in English): '...a mythological doxa has been created: denunciation, demystification (or demythification), has itself become discourse, stock of phrases, catechistic declaration'.

So how are we to read a book which takes this mythological doxa and applies it to television? The problem can be approached in a number of ways but the first choice is whether to evaluate the book as a critical text or to engage with it in dialogue about the object of its criticism. One helpful device we can employ here is the notion of intertextuality — an idea which, in keeping with the multi-layering of this argument, also appears within the book, particularly in Colin McArthur's essay on TV commercials where he argues that using the concept highlights the relationship between advertisements. Intertextuality is another way of saying that understanding a particular work depends more on our knowledge of other similar works than on what we can deduce about its reference to an actual object. Thus *Television Mythologies* is interpreted and experienced through the original *Mythologies* and other cultural criticism. Although this might seem a recipe for solipsistic reflection it can often be a fecund source for new insights, a catalyst which changes the direction of critical activity. This is why Barthes seemed to turn on the mythological doxa he had himself created. He was urging a broader critical enterprise.

The essays collected in *Television Mythologies* seem to refer back to the earlier Barthes; they share the openness and non-technicality of that work and, most importantly, its accessibility. The reason is clear: Len Masterman in his introduction expresses the hope that the book will be 'a contribution to the long struggle to make the serious consideration of television's ideological role part of the accepted currency of public debate about the medium'.

But that very debate is interrogated in John Hartley's contribution when he argues that television criticism — even anti-bourgeois television criticism — has failed by marginalising the medium in respect to the central political issues confronting us. He regards this as 'mythical' thinking, part of a process which leads to unaccountable changes in popular consciousness developing in television. In another version of this myth, one which apparently accepts an ideological role for television *and* concedes its pivotal position, we hear about 'socio-centrality' which amounts to little more than an excuse for supporting the status quo as the middle-ground between undesirable extremes. This is the myth of television as guardian of the liberal tradition. These two examples, the first from the book, the second not, suggest that criticism itself is divided. Masterman offers the book as evidence of a strain of cultural criticism usually ignored in this country, both self-aware and capable of asking the right kind of questions.

Reading the book is enjoyable: an experience which suggests a day watching telly (intertextuality again). The essays focus on previewers, the TV magazines, quiz shows, news, commercial breaks, *Top of the Pops, One Man and His Dog*, personalities, politicians, continuity announcers. There is some stylistic disunity, as on television, but with 23 pieces by as many contributors that's not surprising. Indeed it's often interesting, providing provocative antitheses — Ian Connell's 'Fabulous Powers' and John Hartley's 'Out of Bounds', for example, grating against one another to subvert given explanations.

That is how to read criticism. With a thousand tiny shocks of recognition as myths dissolve into social relations. With the discomforting fracture of one's assumptions. With the certainty that things will never look quite the same again. □

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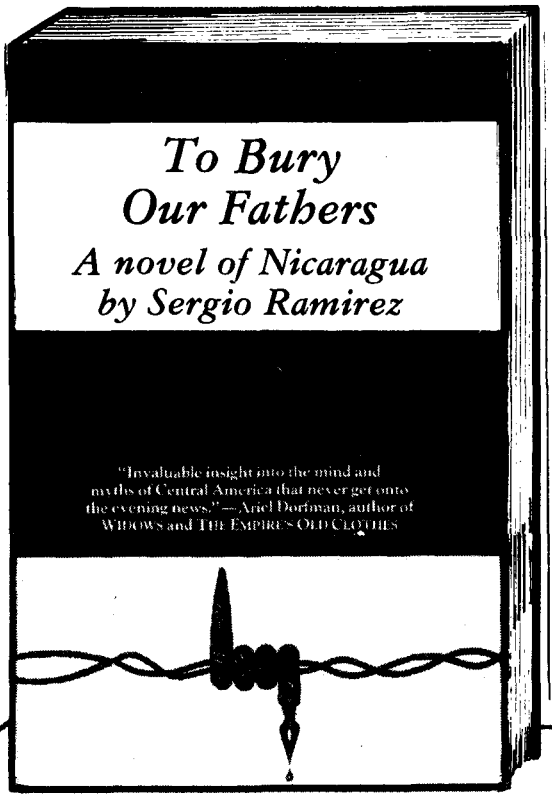
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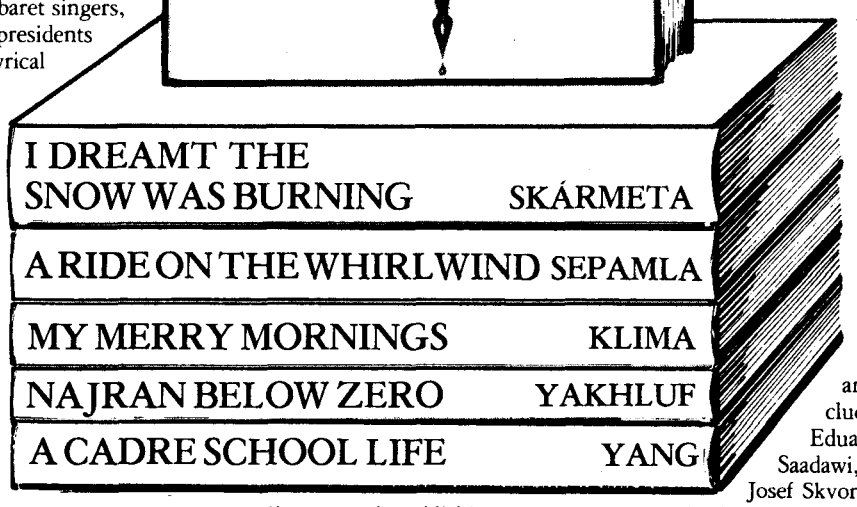
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Shorter reviews

Parallel Lives
PETER BURTON *GMP* £3.50

Promising 'a story about the advantages of being gay', Burton describes four areas in which, for 20 years, he has combined pleasure and business: gay clubs, literary friendships, the rock music business and gay journalism. Of these, the first is the most interesting and positive. A working-class lad romps through the pubs and coffee bars of the Sixties, taking every advantage his prettiness offers him and ignoring the fact that almost everything he does is illegal. That Burton repeatedly dismisses the myth of the 'classlessness' of gay society is especially welcome. There is room for more such memoirs of pre-1967 gay life.

But as he sinks into banality and resorts to dropping names best left undropped, Burton is trapped by his own self-importance. His platitudinous memories of Michael Davidson, Gerald Hamilton and Robin Maugham (all noted autobiographers) add little to what we already know. And an attack on Christopher Isherwood is conspicuously wide of the mark.

Near the end of the book, Burton says 'I have always worked with gay people or for gay organisations; that in itself is a kind of closetry in reverse. It's *so* safe.' The last chapter, about an occasion in 1982 when Burton was queer-bashed on Brighton's seafront, proves his point. Violence came as a revelation. He seems to have realised suddenly that the oppression of gay people is *real*.

As for those 'advantages of being gay' that we were promised, they seem to boil down to a willingness to use and be used by other men in the gay 'old-boy' network. It is not surprising that Burton avoids any political analysis other than the glib suggestion that 'Maggie' would like to send gay people to her own version of Auschwitz (as if Harold, Ted and Jim were so much better) and, on the penultimate page, a nonchalant dismissal of 'what can laughingly be called' the gay movement.

Gregory Woods

Firing Line
RICHARD HOLMES *Cape* £12.95

In *Firing Line*, Richard Holmes, drawing on written accounts (Private Wheeler is well to the fore here) and on very many personal communications, notably from Falklands survivors, Raleigh Trevelyan and that compassionate connoisseur of the battlefield Frank Richardson, identifies those motives which impel young people to persist in trying to kill each other. And what stops them from taking to their heels when they discover that 'war is all Hell boys!' (and these days, 'all Hell girls', who you really would suppose would know better.)

He deals faithfully with the etiquette of surrender and the means employed to discourage it. (If all else fails try splitting the ringleader's head open with a shovel.) He discusses the part played by exhaustion, home sickness, rats and cold — assuaged by urinating on numbed hands — in exacerbating the soldiers' fear not only of death and wounds, but of fear itself. He enumerates those factors which mitigate the soldier's lot. Good leadership, cigarettes, alcohol, the pet boar which kept General Rawlinson company and, of course, that comradeship which, to employ one of Richardson's most striking phrases, makes unheroic groups of friends, 'run away together towards the enemy'.

In his extraordinarily readable addition to the literature of war Dr Holmes has precious little to offer for our comfort. He concedes that, even in our enlightened times, men still regard 'the most passionate of all dramas' as a route to full masculinity. He agrees with Lorenz, rather than with John Keegan (who thinks that war will abolish itself) that the aggressive impulse plays as important a part in the life-preserving organisation of man as it does of insects, and considers that we may still have 'as great a horror of a sterile and unexciting peace as of another Great War' and 'still stand on the start line waiting for the next whistle'.

Bruce Hepburn

Bert Hardy, My Life
Gordon Fraser £14.95
Soviet Photography 1917-1940
ed. SERGEI MOROZOV and VALERIE LLOYD
Orbis £10

'Without slackening our pace, we headed back for West Berlin, and a good hot rum toddy. . .' Hardy's book is a good, chipper read, full of affable Jack-the-Lad opportunism. What of his photographs?

For many years Hardy was chief photographer for the *Picture Post* and in this book we see the variety of his work which ranges from Belsen and Korea to the Kent hopfields and pictures of his own farm. Some of the pictures are painful but this book shows a rare sensitivity in its reproduction of scenes such as those from Belsen — the layout is quiet, reticent and avoids the technique of shock-horror journalism which has, frighteningly, almost turned such images banal. Sometimes Hardy's work was too revealing for some people — his photo essay on the treatment of Korean prisoners was never published in *Picture Post* and its editor, Tom Hopkinson, was sacked because he wanted the essay published when Edward Hulton, proprietor, did not.

Nevertheless, the majority of Hardy's pictures are warm and optimistic. Hardy is like an H. E. Bates character — a Sid Larkin — quick, shrewd and a shade sentimental.

What a contrast Hardy's work is to *Soviet Photography 1917-1940*. It is not that Hardy's work is less contrived than the Soviet work for, on the contrary, some of Hardy's work was artfully staged. No. It is the dead eye of *the* new vision, *the* new photojournalism which ruins these pictures — there is a continuous lack of spontaneity. Of course, there is the exciting record of the drama of industrialisation but that drama is also brutal. In rigidly presenting the heroic view of people these Soviet pictures lose out on the warmth of ordinary emotions and pleasures. The idea is conveyed that there were no Bert Hardys and Sid Larkins in the USSR. And I do not believe that.

Peter Dormer

Revolution and War in Spain 1931-1939
ed. PAUL PRESTON *Methuen* £14.95 & £6.95

More books have been written on the Spanish civil war than about any comparable event. So many of them, however, are the products of bias or dishonesty, that new research is always needed simply to knock off myths.

This volume contains essays from some of the best historians now writing on the civil war and the Second Republic. The contributors share a broadly similar view of Spain in the 1930s, and Shlomo Ben Ami's rejection of the republic's 'inherently self-destructive roots' as an adequate explanation for its collapse is a representative viewpoint. Paul Preston acknowledges the contributors' debt to Gerald Brenan and Raymond Carr, although most of them are more firmly committed to the side of the republicans than either of the two older hispanicists.

The essays are of a generally high standard. Frances Lannon places the republicans' religious legislation in the context of Catholic hostility towards the regime and, indeed, of the Church's long-standing opposition to social reform. The editor contributes an effective piece on the agrarian problem in the south which supports Brenan's view that 'the refusal of the Spanish upper classes to yield an inch in this question [was] the most important single cause of the civil war'.

Among others, there is an informative article on the Basque country by Juan Pablo Fusi, although I think he makes too many claims for the modernity, 'democratic views' and coherence of the Basque Nationalist Party. The separatist wing inside the party may be small but it has always prevented the regionalists from taking an unequivocal position on the limits of autonomy. During the civil war there was thus confusion among Basque nationalists over whether they were fighting for independence or in defence of the Spanish republic. Monzon, a senior figure in the party and the Basque government, had no doubts. Basque resistance against Franco, he said later, was part of a struggle for independence which had begun a hundred years earlier with the first carlist war.

David Gilmour

The Nun The Infidel & The Superman
D. FELICITAS CORRIGAN *John Murray* £12.50

Margaret McLachlan entered Stanbrook Abbey at the age of 18 to spend the remaining 70 years of her life there as Benedictine nun Dame Laurentia. This account of her friendships and correspondence makes the assumption that in arguments about religion the onus of proof lies with the unbeliever. Such an assumption would have displeased Sydney Cockerell (the Infidel), director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, but delighted George Bernard Shaw (the Superman).

Cockerell was never reconciled to his friend being immured behind a double iron grille. It's not to keep me in, she told him, but to keep you out. Why? Because of a call, a 'vocation', known only to those who receive it. Shaw, however, found no difficulties with enclosure, 'I shall again shake your bars and look longingly at the freedom at the other side'. Easily said, perhaps, by one soon to embark on a trip to Africa.

A strange incident there nearly ended their friendship. Shaw, driving in the veldt, mistook the accelerator for the brake and badly injured his wife; as she lay painfully recovering he wrote *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Search for God*. This tale of a native convert's disillusion with institutionalised religion and its superstitions, for which Shaw claimed divine inspiration, deeply shocked and offended his friend. Was it a genuine visitation during hours of intense anxiety or self-deceiving and blasphemous?

Dame Laurentia had no doubts that it was a wicked parody of all the truths she held most sacred. Here, as elsewhere, her faith is uncompromisingly proclaimed, yet I finished this book knowing much more about the Infidel and the Superman than about her. Felicitas Corrigan's commentary is too often an apologia for Catholicism and her subject seems to exist more as a role than as a person. Perhaps good cannot be made interesting? Certainly any true rapprochement between the world and the cloister seems unattainable.

Alan Hurst

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FILMS

Straight and narrow

John Coleman

The Times of Harvey Milk (15)
Everyman
Utu (15)
Classics, Chelsea and Tottenham Court Road
Choose Me (15)
Screen on the Hill; Cinecenta; Classic, Chelsea; Odeon, Kensington
Eddie and the Cruisers (PG)
Odeon, Marble Arch

'IT WAS REALLY a monumentous occasion,' says Anne Kronenberg, going happily portmanteau in her enthusiasm. She is one of eight people whose reminiscences to camera bring present warmth, of affection and anger, to Robert Epstein's excellent documentary, **The Times of Harvey Milk**. Milk was the gay activist, owner of a camera store in San Francisco's 'The Castro' district, who was elected in 1977, at the age of 47, to the city's Board of Supervisors on a platform that took in not merely discrimination against homosexuals but such local issues as rent control, high-rise development, public transport and the rights of senior citizens. To trust the talking heads (and why not?), he was a caring, dynamic man with great charisma and a shrewd sense of the outrageous. 'Harvey said that anyone who could deal with the dogshit problem would be elected mayor'; and a late Seventies TV news clip shows him breezily stepping on a canine turd planted before the interview. He sponsored a gay rights bill for the city, which the actual mayor, George Moscone, readily signed into law; headed the successful opposition to the Briggs Amendment, which would have banned homosexuals from teaching in California schools; and anticipated an untimely death. In 1978, just a year after Milk became a board supervisor, both he and Mayor Moscone were assassinated.

The lethal spokesman for the moral majority was Dan White, a fireman and ex-cop, who had resigned from the board just 17 days before, changed his mind, then run into fierce lobbying by Milk against his re-appointment. Entering City Hall by a side window to avoid metal detection of the gun and extra cartridges he was carrying, White brought off the double killing. At his subsequent trial, five psychiatrists testified to a depression induced in part by consuming too much junk food; he was convicted of voluntary manslaughter; on 17 January 1984 he was released from prison. One of the latterday 'witnesses' underlines the grisly irony: had White restricted himself to murdering the mayor, he would probably have got life.

Epstein's film, soberly narrated by Harvey Fierstein, cuts about among footage from newsreels and those interviews to extraordinary effect, all the more so in that it incorporates so much that is gay in the old dictionary sense: street carnivals, joyful and funny anecdotes

Harvey Milk campaigning for election in San Francisco; a year later he was dead

from erstwhile friends and colleagues; even a marvellous tiny clip of Carter, nudged back on to the rostrum by a whispering aide, adding his voice to the anti-Briggs faction. Jim Elliot, a union man, spells out his initial feelings: 'Jesus Christ, what's labour coming to, endorsing a fruit?' And a woman campaign consultant who did volunteer work for Harvey Milk paints a vivid portrait of the chaos at his HQ behind the store. There is even some attempt at sympathetic balance. A university professor, Sally Gearhart, deliberately sets out to understand the fears of the moral majority, putting herself for a moment in their shaking shoes. (Perhaps, in the cause of absolute honesty, Epstein might have found a way to establish here that lesbian Ms Gearhart's own background was in Christian fundamentalism before the new revealed truth of liberation in the Castro district.)

The tale grows bleaker. Dan White has been glimpsed, on a street corner, telling a TV reporter, 'It's old-fashioned values that built this country.' A confrontation, it is hinted, was inevitable from some quarter. And cameras were there to record the aftermath: scurrying policemen, covered stretchers, the apprehension of White, the huge candle-flaring procession that swamped the neighbourhood — rightly described by Gearhart as 'one of the most eloquent expressions of a community's response to violence that I've ever seen', in that it was vast, muted, passive with grief. What followed that outrageous verdict was to be different, a far cry from the jubilation of victory 18 months back. Now there was a full-scale demonstration, burgeoning into riot. Cop cars blazed, 300 people were injured, 'suddenly all I wanted,' admits Tom Ammiano, a gay teacher, 'was blood revenge'. *The Times of Harvey Milk* is a story of injustice being seen to be done.

New Zealander Geoff Murphy's **Utu** sets off in 1870 with the cavalry mistakenly putting to the torch a Maori village friendly to the British, personified by starchy Colonel Elliot. A scout, Te Wheke (Anzac Wallace), swears *utu* or revenge and the rest of this blood-boltered excursion, which generally makes the striking most of its rain-soaked locations, displays him going about it, picking up guerrilla associates and assorted enemies en route. A strange impromptu and alfresco trial unites these last in disposing of the unruly Maori. Unfortunately, this event is chopped up and spread throughout a film which is already confusing and badly acted, notable exceptions made for Wi Kuki Kaa as another Maori scout and wonderful Bruno Lawrence as a larger-than-life, near-comic avenger armed with a home-made four-barrelled gun. Half-cocked. A worse disappointment is Alan Rudolph's **Choose Me**, in which Keith Carradine wanders through a stylised LA as a fellow with a mysterious, multiple past and a kissy present. Dubious beneficiaries of his favours are Genevieve Bujold as an uptight dispenser of radio phone-in advice and Lesley Ann Warren as a bar-owner who can't say no. Someone should have. **Eddie and the Cruisers** is a noisy inadvertence, plastering Sixties rock 'n' roll with a thoroughly wet Eighties plot about some missing tapes inspired by the French poet Rambow. □

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Amadeus Peter Shaffer's rich, vulgar and potent fantasy about mediocrity's revenge on genius, sumptuously directed by Milos Forman, with F. Murray Abraham outstanding as Salieri and Mozart's music cascading from the screen.

A Private Function Blissful and British double first as Michael Mowbray steers top-notch cast through puncturingly word-perfect Alan Bennett comedy set in 1947 Yorkshire. Nagged by social-climbing wife, meek chiropodist gets revenge on local unworthies by stealing black-market pig. (Maggie Smith, Michael Palin).

Favourites of the Moon Summary-defying, hypnotic entertainment from Georgian director Otar Yosseliani, making his fifth film during stay in a Paris he packs with pass-the-parcel thieves, tramps, whores, mistresses, anarchists and *flics*.

Beverly Hills Cop Brilliant young Eddie Murphy (*48 HRS, Trading Places*) hoists workaday hunt-the-cocaine thriller into compulsive viewing.

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THEATRE

More than words

Benedict Nightingale

Martine
JEAN-JACQUES BERNARD *Lyttelton*

THE EDUCATED view of Jean-Jacques Bernard seems to be that he was the Harold Pinter of the Gallic Twenties. Partly that's because he was credited by his original admirers with creating something called 'the theatre of the inexpressible', and partly it's because of some of his own comments on his work. It was the Frenchman who declared: 'It is less by the dialogue in itself than under the shock of it that the deepest feelings are revealed. There is a dialogue lying beneath the heard dialogue; that's what an audience must be made to feel.' It was the Englishman who wrote: 'Most of the time we're inexpressive, giving little away, unreliable, elusive, evasive. But it's out of these attributes that a language arises. A language, I repeat, where under what is said another thing is being said.' In other words, both men recognised what the slick, glib playsmiths of their respective heydays did not: there are times when nothing is less eloquent than eloquence, nothing less silent than silence.

But there the similarities stop. When Pinter's people don't quite mean what they're saying or say what they're meaning, it's because they smell danger and wish to avoid direct confrontation, or for some such half-conscious reason. For them, language tends to be stratagem, a way of sending their front-line feelings into action safely camouflaged. When Bernard's people do the same, it's either because they haven't the words adequately to express their emotions: the case of the peasant-girl Martine. Or it's because they don't fully understand what their emotions are: the case of the young journalist Julien and the woman he marries, Jeanne.

Yet this is a pretty abstract approach to a play that's marvellously and movingly real. Julien meets Martine on the road to the village where both she and his grandmother live. For him, she's a pastoral ideal come bewitchingly to life, with her freshness of face and long, gold hair. For her, he's something more serious, a man considerably more sensitive than the plodding swain so doggedly courting her. If a more conventional dramatist were in charge of the plot, the result of their romance might be seduction, pregnancy, scandal, desertion, suicide, heaven knows what. But it's with good reason that Bernard has been compared with Chekhov. He's interested in suggestion and moral nuance, not in sensational event or the blacks and whites of melodrama. It's his aim to show how little, not how much, can destroy a person. It's also to show that the most good-natured can achieve that destruction.

'Look how symbolic it is,' says Julien of a field outside his granny's window. 'It has exactly the shape of a cornucopia.' Martine's reply is predictable: 'cornu-what?' No wonder the arrival of Jeanne, who can complete his every quotation and identify the poet too, is followed by his rapid switch of emotional allegiance. All Martine can do is quietly suffer while this very suitable relationship takes its course: marriage, birth of a baby, removal to Paris. Her speechless grief is intensified by the apparent friendliness of the young wife, who feeds her chummy confidences about the ups and downs of life with Julien. For a time one thinks this mere insensitivity; but actually it's darker, more sinister. 'I hurt her, I seem to have to do it,' explains Jessica Turner's puzzled Jeanne to Andrew Wadsworth's troubled Julien. That's a line very characteristic of Bernard.

But it's in the opportunities he offers the actress playing Martine that he's most extraordinary. Only twice does she speak openly of her predicament. She suddenly says, thinking of the village and her place in it, 'It's all so ordinary.' And towards the end she asks uncomprehending Julien, 'Isn't it enough what you done to me?' Mainly she must sit and listen, or stand and look, while proof after proof of her rejection is amiably offered her; and some of those moments are remarkably fraught and painful, thanks to the spaces Bernard leaves between the lines and Wendy Morgan's ability to fill them. Hers is a wonderfully truthful performance, whether she's bashfully ignoring Julien's first, tentative advances or bleakly enduring news of Jeanne's pregnancy. Few actresses could hang their heads with quite the effect Ms Morgan achieves. Few could so unsentimentally suggest they're wincing, bleeding, breaking in some internal torture-chamber so closed off that nothing as comprehensible as protest can find its way out.

Not that the play is simply an invitation to a highbrow National audience to indulge nice, sympathetic emotions. It's more uncomfortable, more accusing than that, as the last minutes of Peter Hall's subdued yet intense production demonstrate. Julien is alone with Martine, herself now married to her stolid suitor, and uses the occasion for nostalgic reverie about their enchantingly innocent flirtation: 'I attach great importance to memory,' he earnestly informs her. 'Once something has left an imprint on me, it's for good.' But what depth of imprint? For him, it's been a diversion, a pastime, and now it's an opportunity for educated reflection, a source of solace as he girds himself for his high-bourgeois future. He has the words, but little inside to express; and seems blithely to assume that she's as emotionally shallow, and probably more so, because of her lack of words. Such is the narcissistic arrogance of intellectuals, and not just French intellectuals.

The last we see of Martine emphasises how blind, how self-indulgent he is. There she sits, her hair a severe bun, her face already looking as if the frost has bitten it and the ice begun to freeze it over, opposite the unloved husband who has just promised her children and more children, work and more work. It's what might have happened without Julien, but because of him it seems a hundred times more chilling, to her and to us. □

We regret that the promised article on compact discs has been postponed because Andrew Clements is unwell

Watch it!

Peter Forbes

WHEN TORVILL and Dean won their last Olympic gold, a journal which shall be nameless called them 'a couple of downmarket ballet dancers on ice' and Frank Keating in the *Guardian* dismissed ice dancing as 'little more than well-publicised auditions for future ice show stars'. Clive James, of course, did a triple-axle on his typewriter for them, but T & D were the spectators' choice, needing no expert intermediary to interpret their grace and skill.

Spectators have a bad name: if they're not football hooligans tearing some foreign capital apart, they are at best passive, unfit loafers whose only exercise consists of yanking the ring-pulls off cans of Newcastle Brown in front of *Match of the Day*. It's time to make a case for the spectator.

Without spectators, there would be no need for sports commentators: hence no Colemanballs, no footballers 'nodding Homerically' into Julie Welch's goalmouth down at the Pseuds. The peculiar contortions of the English language perpetrated by sports commentators have become a spectator sport in their own right. Michael Frayn once wrote of the possibility of turning discussion programmes into sport, complete with blow-by-blow commentary:

> Sir Harold [Sidewinder] swings at it easily, as if he had all the time in the world. . .What a grand old exponent of the game he is! There are few men half his age who could put another twist on an already twisted meaning with that aplomb. What's he up to? Is he. . .? Yes, he is — he's explaining very steadily and easily that the topic as he has now formulated it reminds him of something Lord Curzon told him in 1910.

Soon after Michael Frayn wrote that, a curious mutation occurred in the sports commentators' firmament: every notable event in the play began to be described in the intonation with which you'd say: 'Who'd have *thought* it?' or 'Would you *believe* it?' Slightly Welsh, querulous, and a touch of the limp wrist too. A variation on this is the world-weary *déjà vu* of 'and he's gone!' (cricket) or 'and he's put it away!' (football), as if the commentator already knew what was going to happen.

Sport is spectacle, and a sense of occasion is a necessary ingredient. You just can't get it without an audience. Most of the poetry written about sport, for instance, is about the occasion. Take John Arlott's poem 'Cricket at Worcester, 1938' which begins: 'Dozing in deck-chair's gentle curve,/Through half-closed eyes I watched the cricket,/Knowing the sporting press would say/Perks bowled well on a perfect wicket.' The cricket seems almost incidental to the mood, and what a brilliant stroke of bathos that fourth line is!

Much of the pleasure of sport is similarly vicarious, even for the participants. One of the characters in Granada's programme *Seven-Up* was a failed jockey whose greatest moment in life had been to ride in the same race as Lester Piggot and come last.

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Nick Maland

Spectators spend a lot of time bandying statistics about — batting averages, games without a win, maximum breaks — a yen for information that might be better employed promoting the microchip revolution or some such worthy goal. But to dabble in useless information is a fundamental human need. And it isn't really useless either because take it away and you'll find that people are totting up grimmer figures than David Gower's recent batting average, e.g. how many heads can you take out with a single nuke.

The truth is that sporting feats are so fleeting that they need to be remembered over pints the next day and evermore in order to exist at all. The only good thing to be said for videos is that they give this fleeting brilliance a semblance of permanent life (a boon to ageing sportsmen, who have to spend most of their lives reliving former glories). The last word belongs with Louis MacNeice, a poet who sometimes preferred sport to art:

> . . .to discourage people from watching games is to forget that a game, like a play, is an art-form — something whose pattern can best be perceived from the outside. The players have the *élan*, but we get the total pattern — and some vicarious *élan* by the way. □

Among this week's contributors:

RUPERT CHRISTIANSEN is the author of *Prima Donna* (Bodley Head, 1984).

JUSTIN WINTLE's books include novels — *Paradise for Hire* (Secker, 1984) and *Mortadella* (Secker, 1985) — and works of reference — *Makers of Modern Culture* and *Makers of Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Routledge).

STEVEN ROSE is Professor of Biology at the Open University; he recently co-authored *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology and Human Nature* (Penguin, 1984).

LIZ HERON is the editor of *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up in the Fifties* to be published shortly by Virago.

JAMES SIMMONS's poem is taken from *From the Irish* to be published by Blackstaff Press in early May.

FRANK FIELD was, for ten years, Director of the Child Poverty Action Group; he is now MP for Birkenhead. His more recent publications include *Inequality in Britain: Freedom, Welfare and the State* (1981) and *Poverty and Politics* (1982).

DAVID GILMOUR's most recent book is *The Transformation of Spain: From Franco to the Constitutional Monarchy* (Quartet, 1985).

PETER FORBES is currently Writer-in-Residence in Swindon Divisional Library.

Naseem Khan

So there

THERE's a great lurid wall of shimmering red paper at the back of the stage, like an everlasting Christmas. Not that the atmosphere is, at first, particularly festive or excited. It's 7.30p.m. in New Merlin's Cave, a long low beigey room with dingy lights, part of a pub somewhere behind the central postal sorting office at the back of faceless King's Cross. There are a few people nursing their real ale; the PA booms out muzak. Mouthy and Busby, two cool young black kids due to come on later — trainers, dark glasses and carefully pressed creased jeans — test out the mikes, flash practice smiles into the void. At the back the bar staff wait. For what?

By the looks of it this is a music venue — the gear, the lights, the general atmosphere of a fuse waiting to be fired. Poetry, you would not perhaps expect. And that the organisers would take as a compliment. Apples and Snakes, a four-person collective, was set up in 1982 in order, said one of them, Mandy Williams, to provide a non-rarefied base for performance poetry. Since then, their fortunes have peaked — with the heady days of trendy cabaret and a regular 180 packing out their gigs — and plateaued. It hasn't been a settled few years: they've moved from pub to pub, but they've also, through the help of the GLC, been able to expand nationally, to Carlisle, Newcastle (where they have a regular exchange with Tyneside Writers' Workshop and play to full houses). In their three years of life they have put on well over 150 poets in a range of venues from the Poetry Society to the Purcell Room, from the original Adams Arms (and hence their name) to the present base, New Merlin's Cave.

Performers and poets are clearly as diverse as the venues. Apples and Snakes have pre-conditions, but they tend to be vague, generalised ones — that material must be original, should be non-racist and non-sexist, should be thought-provoking and put over with reasonable competence. 'The audience should be made to feel involved.' The introduction to their anthology, published last year by Pluto Press, promises more (threatens, some might say): performers 'shout, scream, bellow, boom, rant, roar, rave and whisper, they also murmur, throb and pulsate. They reinforce their words with stage craft and charisma, with manic gesticulations and convulsed dance-like movements.' Although there was remarkably little ranting, raving, bellowing and screaming the night that Work in Progress went, the point is well taken — this is not, by any means, a normal, traditional poetry evening.

What it is is harder to define. There were four acts that evening, each of which was completely different in style, content and objectives. First on — a difficult spot — was playwright and poet

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Deborah Levy with clever work that skated elegantly and elliptically on thin ice: haikus to contraceptives, a neat elision from an ode to Macdonalds strawberry milkshake to the 'pink sticky scars over Vietnam', a love song of inscrutable clichés to a Japanese lover. On her heels came Mouthy Ranking and his colleague Busby Super, the two toasters who'd been trying out the mikes early on. Their pieces were chanted rhythmically to reggae on the soundsystem, and were hypnotic and stylish but clearly largely incomprehensible to the growing audience. For that reason, it worked better with the later slower pieces like 'What a Sin, Why Maggie Keep Rate-Cappin". But their urgings to 'Move We Body' at the end resulted in no takers in an audience that preferred listening to dancing. Levi Tafari's dub poetry was, by contrast, more accessible. Delivered in conjunction with Jennifer John's electric piano accompaniment, it made its political points with the simplicity and directness of graffiti. Interspersed with his work were Ms John's own blues — sweet-sour lyrics of love and loss that she sang quite beautifully. The couple finished effectively with the poignant Billie Holliday number, 'Strange Fruit', and got an ovation.

Nevertheless, easily the highest scorer that evening was the third performer, Roy Hutchins: a tall neutral-faced man with the obligatory mop of unkempt hair, old-fashioned dark grey slacks, a blue gingham shirt and a nervous manner. Hutchins doesn't buttonhole or attack. He stands at the mike and talks, diffidently, about social inadequacy, recreating moments of horror — the social occasions when you find yourself talking utter rubbish ('Picasso was basically impotent'), fears of being thought unmanly (he grinds an invisible kitten under his macho heel), sexual acquisitiveness. It is compulsive stuff — funny, sharp, unexpected and put over with a wonderfully deft use of mime. Two Hutchinses are in fact jostling for space on the little stage: the public Hutchins — competitive and tough — and the private one, constantly appalled at the behaviour of his outer self. The gulf between the two (the territory that the Joeys for instance have exploited so well) makes for rich, wincing, comic terrain.

Performance it certainly is, but poetry? No one that night was too disposed to quibble over definitions. Indeed, the world of performance poetry has developed anyhow to encourage precisely that sort of laxness — call it cross-fertilisation, rather. Poetry rubs shoulders with cabaret, with politics, with music, with the surreal witticisms possible in performance art. Feeding into it are other, more recently developing streams. There's the current upsurge in poetry evidenced by the work coming out of the writers' workshops and being printed in small local publications. There's the increased popularity of poetry as a form for young black writers in particular.

An evening at an Apples and Snakes event does nothing to disprove the trenchant declaration they make at the start of their anthology — 'Poetry is a living art,' they say boldly. 'It talks to people, it makes electrical and chemical fires in their brain cells, it awakes obscure memories and tired tastebuds, it rots the toenails of pompous fools, so there...' What more can one say? □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

If

THOUGH SET in 1767, **The Holy Experiment** (BBC-1) was more interesting as science fiction than as period drama. Either Fritz Hochwaelder believes that the notorious Society of Jesus (Jesuits) were really a band of angels or he is offering us an allegory. Here we have the noble-headed Alan Howard, Father Provincial of a Jesuit state that has sprung up within the Spanish colony administered from Buenos Aires. Everything is done to persuade us that the Jesuits are the only decent masters ever to have governed a foreign land. Tribal leaders come in asking for baptism, pleading asylum from the vicious Spanish slave owners outside. Now the latter burst in complaining that their slaves are absconding to the Jesuit state, thereby undercutting their tea prices. Yet we learn from an honest Dutch merchant that Jesuit prices are higher because their tea is better; that they have won the goodwill of their subjects with music rather than muskets. The state even seems to be some kind of early commune, albeit based on blind discipline and the Bible.

The Spanish diplomat sent from Madrid to look into local suspicion and complaints is an old school friend of the Father Provincial. He exonerates him from all accusations (gold embezzlement, etc.) then tells him that he is there to wind up the Jesuit operation in South America.

> You are guilty of being right. That is why you must be destroyed. Today you have 50 settlements. Tomorrow you may have 100. How much longer before you drive us out of this continent? The kingdom of God has become quite a power on earth . . .

The interest of the play lies less in its primitive stagecraft — one moment the Jesuits are under 'protective custody', the next they have overpowered their invigilators, only to surrender to them on the instructions of a mysterious undercover agent from Rome — than in its conceptual possibilities.

Was a potential kingdom of heaven on earth really withdrawn by the Jesuits as blasphemous? Would it have been communist? And is a communist state ultimately incompatible with human behaviour or only with the idea of a hereafter? 'His Holiness would have been more pleased if we had failed in Paraguay,' the emissary from Rome tells the Father. More interesting still, might the Jesuits have held on to their possessions in South America in the name of Faith & Charity, where the Spanish lost them to vice and greed?

Hochwaelder makes no more than signals in the direction of characterisation, which is left to expert actors like Michael Gambon of the sarcastic schoolmaster tone and Alan Howard's noble-humanity-on-the-chopping-block stuff, all witnessed elsewhere recently and often. But he persuades us that this was indeed one of history's lesser known turning points: the moment when a few men, Christians, condemned a continent to damnation in order to preserve the possibility of redemption, an afterlife, and, of course, the power of the priesthood. The mind flickers, buckles and wonders vaguely if the author was thinking of modern Israel at all.

The End of Empire (C4) reached India last week, having exhausted us with about a thousand old-buffer eye-witness accounts of the fall of Singapore the week before. I suppose there had to be this kind of literal-minded follow-up to all those fanciful Raj soaps of yesteryear, with, last week, even the metaphor of the jewel being used to remind us — proudly, it seemed to me — that India was the biggest possession ever held by an Imperial power, one fifth of all humanity, though of course there was never any question of it posing as a heaven on earth.

British India was founded by pirates for a distant barbarian queen. Muslim Moghuls had ruled the sub-continent for 700 years before the British came and their courts made that of Queen Victoria look provincial. This one could believe.

We saw already fictitious-looking footage of the vice-regal celebrations for Lord Linlithgow's daughter's wedding in 1939, put on to reassure the world of Britain's ability to hold it all together still in the face of the Yellow Peril, then a return to black-and-white three short years later 'when the fabric that had seemed unshakeable' was riven by some other kind of metaphor, and the End of Empire was only waiting for the End of the War to start clambering into fiction and our television screens. The toings and froings of British politics between '39 and '42 were hard to keep up with, but it seems Winston Churchill deliberately scuppered his emissary Stafford Cripps's attempts at negotiations with Congress in order to delay Independence and hang onto the Indian Army for a few more months.

Why couldn't old public schoolboys Jinnah (for the Muslims) and Nehru (for the Hindus) patch things up between the two great cultures? Gandhi was convinced India would have Asian masters after the war. Jinnah saw that he was turning the moderate, middle-class, British-influenced Congress Party into a mass movement of Hindus and decided to form the warlike Muslim League with expectations of post-war supremacy. We saw much footage of his elegant Mekonesque figure, then James Cameron remembering a conversation with him that had to be terminated when Jinnah realised he wasn't properly dressed: 'That fool of a bearer put the wrong cufflinks in my shirt.'

In Panorama's **Germany Divided — For Good** (BBC-1) we saw again the terrible dangers of partition, so reminiscent of nuclear fission, where the two halves of an indivisible whole are kept apart for so long that its reunion has a will of its own and enough latent power to sunder a fabric that had seemed unshakeable, etc. etc. 'I ought to be sad,' said a West German youth wary of communist hordes over-running his wretched Hamburg, 'but I am really a little indifferent about it, as are my comrades.' How easy to envision his children's violent reaction to his complacency. □

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Weekend competition

No 2870 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Wanted, advance publicity for a play, film, ballet or concert which convinces you that on no account will you want to see the production in question. Max. 120 words by 8 May.

No 2867 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Retellings of the Greek myths.

Report **By Ms de Meaner**

Sap rising, is it, my chickens? Blood a-fizzing? Nerves a-tingle? Clouts just panting to be shed? I can think of no other explanation for the presence this week of what I can only describe as a *dangerous impertinence*. Did you imagine that I was on holiday, dear Messrs Benson and Stanley, that you presumed to question the ways of my department? In asking you to retell the myths as though by 'such' writers as Austen, Scott, Weldon, we meant, as should have been obvious, writers whose style and subject matter are enough removed from those of Euripides, Aeschylus and co. to create an interesting tension when dragged into closer proximity. To those, below, who not only understood the question, but arrived at some not unamusing solutions, ten pounds per entry.

D.H. Lawrence

Oedipus waited impatiently for the herdsman, who was to reveal the secret of his parentage.

In an ecstasy of emotion, Jocasta begged him to ignore the tidings. 'What can 'e know, 'e's nowt but a common man,' she challenged, reverting, in her anguish of soul, to her native dialect.

But Oedipus would not be deterred. Perhaps Jocasta feared that he was of lowly origin, and wished to conceal it. He knew these things were important to her — didn't she always put out the best terra cotta whenever the temple priest came to tea?

Listening to the herdsman's words, a dark core of sensuous knowledge began to germinate within him. A blood consciousness, a consciousness that they were one stream, one nucleus, revealed itself in all its vile implications. This woman, with whom he had experienced the most intimate communion, who had borne the fruit of his fecundity, was his own mother.

ROSIE WHITE

Charles Dickens

Midas was rich. Nobody doubted that. Not that there were any black-coated gentlemen in those days to watch for him to file his accounts, or follow his dealings on 'Change; nor any sharp-eyed ladies to appraise his carriage or count his servants. But on one thing everyone was agreed. Midas was rich.

Rich as Croesus, some said.

However, since both these eminent gentlemen inhabited the mysterious world of legend, where wealth can be created at the whim of the teller, I could not myself undertake to say positively which one was the richer. But Croesus has been the standard of richness for as long as this poor scribe can remember, and we would be as well employed in arguing the matter as in taking a thermometer to determine whether he was as cool as a cucumber. Let us agree at the outset, then, that Midas was as rich as Croesus.

NOEL PETTY

Philip Larkin

Oh, no one can deny
That Jason was much braver than I;
Compared with such a classical hero
I rate an absolute zero.

Having set out to recover the Golden Fleece —
Which was his big set piece —
Jason had the misfortune to meet and marry
Medea
In mid-career.

He did not guess
The woman was a sorceress;
She turned out so bitchy and bossy
That he deserted her for a girl named Glaucê.

But before he had a chance to screw her,
Medea slew her.
Such was life in those days — touch-and-go,
Full of incident. Messy, though.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Jane Austen

'It is a little provoking,' said Iphigenia, 'to find oneself to be so profoundly affected by anything as mundane as the weather. I am sure that meteorology is a very ungenteel study, and I am sure that Mamma will not approve.'

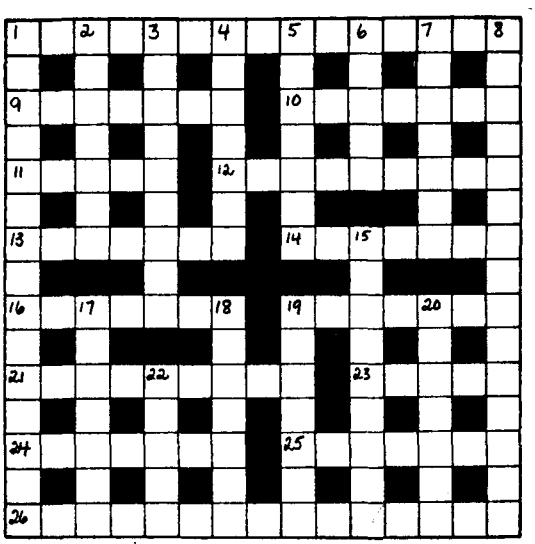
'I am sure that I should not care to be used in such a matter,' said Electra, 'and for a mere spell of fine weather. I dare say it would be quite exciting to exchange oneself for a thunderstorm.'

'I doubt, Ellie,' observed Iphigenia, with not a little acidity, 'whether you would feel the same way if Papa had chosen you for this particular role. Should I wear my sprigged muslin for the occasion, I wonder?'

O.O. ANTONIO

Weekend Crossword 1477

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1477, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 7 May.



Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

ACROSS

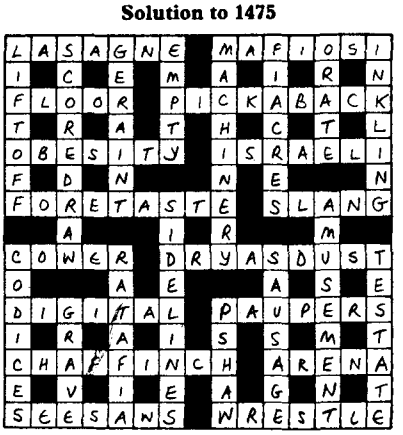
1. Gamblers improving? (6,3,6)
9. Trooped about being a menace to the enemy (7)
10. One appearing in standard colour is prevented from making a hit (7)
11. Not so warm but taking the company to heart (5)
12. The controller to go into that place (9)
13. It is more plausible to start going with a feminist (7)
14. Wide area of water where vessels are seen in the river (7)
16. Regarding about 101 as old (7)
19. The skin has to count for something around fifty (7)
21. Dependents discover a child behind the woods (9)
23. Organ which has twitch after medical treatment (5)
24. A baby fed on an element (7)
25. It flies and brings music to the joint (7)
26. Tragic figure who makes nations and masses go wild (6,9)

DOWN

1. They got one into deep water, having one degree with a subject and another nearly all language (15)
2. You cannot go beyond them so there is merit in changing (7)
3. Bighead missing from former Common Market mob is detestable (9)
4. He endorses one who chooses publicity (7)
5. Cut out about a page to secure a reduction (7)
6. Strange characteristic of the beer I enjoy drinking (5)
7. No train crash seen in France (7)
8. Escaped looters I disturbed receive signals from a distance (15)
15. River trip spoilt without our making a stew (9)
17. Study shape and follow pattern (7)
18. If time were lost the password would be a girl's name (7)
19. The currency is changed once without the tax being put up (7)
20. Hold on to a note when going after an animal (5,2)
22. Time to join and become a poet's friend (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1475



Prizewinners to 1475

M.J. Bailey (Southsea, Hants.)
Jean Robinson (Ilkley)
Charles E. Strafford (Stone, Staffs.)

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CND CAMPAIGNS ORGANISER

CND requires a **national campaigns organiser** to work in CND's Projects Department.

S/he will be responsible for organising national campaigns designed to enable CND groups to take the arguments for nuclear disarmament to the public. Currently the main responsibility is with the campaign against the British Trident programme.

We are looking for a resourceful and imaginative person who is familiar with working in a team. An ability to work well under pressure is essential.

Some evening and weekend work will be required. Salary **£7,932** includes London Weighting. Pay parity in operation. Holiday **25 days** pa.

Application forms and job description available from: **Fred Barker, CND, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ.**

Closing date: **10 May**
Interview date: **24 May**

We welcome your application which will be considered on merit irrespective of race, marital status or sex.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS

has a vacancy for a **senior branch clerk** in its London Freelance Office. The work will involve the supervision of two members of staff and the general administration of the branch, dealing with the servicing of members' contributions and membership records, branch and committee meetings etc. A knowledge of trade union work processes would be an advantage but more important is the ability to deal sympathetically with the queries and problems of freelance journalists and a proven record of staff supervision. A commitment to the trade union movement is essential.

Salary will commence at **£8,436** p.a. Four weeks holiday in the first year, rising to five weeks after one year's service and six weeks after six years' service. Other benefits include interest free season ticket loan, and a 32½ hour week. The successful applicant will be required to join APEX.

Please write with full C.V. to John Macarthy, Head Office Administrator, National Union of Journalists, Acorn House, 314 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP, on or before 7 May 1985.
The NUJ is an equal opportunities employer.

WTS

WANTED:

CO-ORDINATOR

PO1 Scale: £10,716-£11,562

The Women's Technology Scheme offers 12 months training to women over 25 who want to work in new technology. The Scheme aims to provide high quality instruction in micro-electronics and computing in a supportive and encouraging environment. The Scheme is funded by the Liverpool City Council and the European Social Fund and is subject to annual review.

We are looking for someone to replace our Co-ordinator who is seconded by the local education authority and will be leaving in **August 1985**. Applicants should have a commitment to increased training opportunities for women and recent financial and administrative or managerial experience relevant to the voluntary sector. Teaching, technical or industrial experience not essential but would be an advantage.

For further details and application forms contact: **the Women's Technology Scheme, Merseyside Trade Union, Community and Unemployed Resource Centre; 24 Hardman Street, Liverpool L1 9AX (tel. 051-709 4356)**. Closing date for applications is — **13 May 1985.**

The Women's Technology Scheme is an Equal Opportunities employer.

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

WANTED: CND enthusiast/historian/archivist/retired person? Willing on volunteer basis to put regular time into sorting out and maintaining CND's archives. Travel & lunch costs paid. More information from Bruce Kent, 01-263 0977.

RESEARCHER REQUIRED (part-time) by Member of Parliament for preparation of committee work and speeches. Box (16)0672.

PERSONAL

ESPERANTO: the non-national language. Information: WEM, 29 Farrance Road, Chadwell Heath, Essex.

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society of civil & public servants

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The post will involve preparation of policy and advisory papers for senior officers and general support for national negotiations. The post holder will be expected to take primary responsibility for work in the area of equal opportunities for women members and to contribute to the work of the Research Department in other areas as required.

Candidates should be capable of a high standard of drafting work and preparing policy papers under pressure. An ability to handle statistical information would also be an advantage.

The post holder will be paid on an annual rate of £5,126 (i.e. half the full rate, inclusive of Inner London Weighting).

Applications should be sent to the Assistant General Secretary (Finance and Organisation), Society of Civil and Public Servants, 124/130 Southwark Street, London SE1 0TU enclosing full CV with details of education, employment history, trade union experience and other relevant information together with a day time telephone number. ***Closing date for applications is 7 May 1985.***

COURSES

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now available, mirrors the style of the **Barclays' Bank Annual Report** but reveals what the bank would prefer remained hidden – the facts about Barclays' massive support for apartheid.

Copies **75p** each plus **25p p&p** from: **ELTSA (End Loans to Southern Africa), 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9SG.**

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LISTINGS

FRI 26 APR

LONDON 'Embryo Rights & Women's Rights' debate between Soc. for Protection of the Unborn Child/Life & Revolutionary Communist Party/a communist doctor. 7.30pm Holborn Library Theobalds Rd, WC1.

LONDON 'On the Edge of Fear' – eyewitness account from Namibia by Rev John Wheeler – City AA Grp. political discn. with slides. 8.15pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1.

LONDON Mass Picket of South African Embassy, Trafalgar Sq. 5.30pm-7.30pm and every Fri. night. **Org. City AA Grp. 01-837 6050.**

SAT 27 APR

MANCHESTER 'Capri & Meliantu' 7.30pm Great Hall, Manchester Town Hall. Adm. £2 at door or from **Org. Manchester Chile Solidarity C/O 91 Northumberland Rd, M.16.**

LONDON Memorial Rally for the People who fell at Lesotho, Crossroads & Langa 2pm-6pm Africa Centre, 38 King St, WC1. **Org. Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.**

SUN 28 APR

LONDON 'The Phoenix Rises from the Ashes – Reflections on the Holocaust and the rise of Israel' by Mickey Yudkin. 8pm 56 Lymington Rd, NW6. **Org. MAPAM, 01-328 2554.**

MON 29 APR

LONDON 'Racism in science' by Charlie Owen, Thomas Coram Research Unit. 6.30pm Grafton Arms, 72 Grafton Way, W1. **Org. BSSRS, 9 Poland St, W1.**

LONDON 'Structure of solicitors' profession – the need for change.' Central London Legal Action Grp. meeting 7pm Poly of Central London, Red Lion Sq, WC1.

CH.4 TV 'Nowhere to Hide' – the peace film 11pm.

LONDON 'Defend a Woman's Right to Choose' – the Powell Bill – discn. & seminar. 7.30pm The Florence, Florence St, N1. **Org. IS&F Labour Party Womens Section.**

TUES 30 APR

LONDON 'Democracy in the NHS' by Maddie Halliday, London Health Democratisation Campaign. 8pm Red Rose Labour Club, Seven Sisters Rd, N4. **Org. North London SHA, 7 Thorpedale Rd, N4. 01-263 3982.**

LONDON 'Child Sexual Abuse Preventive Education Project' Radical Health Visitors Grp. meeting 7pm Old Coffee House, 49 Beak St, W1. **Details: RHVG C/O 9 Poland St, W1.**

LONDON Britain/Vietnam Assoc. Grand Victory Celebration 5.30pm Main Conference Hall, County Hall, SE1. Adm. by ticket only from **Mrs. Joan Yuille, BVA, 52 St. John's Park, London, SE3 01-858 7930.**

WED 1 MAY

TREORCHY, Rhondda 'The Welsh Socialist Tradition' by Dafydd Elis Thomas MP. 8pm Lesser Hall, Parc and Dare Hall. Adm. Free. **Org. LLAFUR & Maerdy NUM Lodge & S. Wales District WEA.**

LONDON 'The Fight against Ratecapping' 7.30pm County Hall, Rm. 143. Spkrs. John McDonnell, Johanna Fawkes. **Org. London Labour Briefing.**

LONDON Anti-Imperialist May Day Celebration with national liberation speakers from the world's struggle. County Hall, SE1. **Details: Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, 212 Church Rd, Willesden, NW10.**

LONDON CSE London Forum Celebration of May Day with socialist debate and a drink. 8pm Wheatsheaf, Rathbone Pl. W1. **Details: 01-960 5989.**

LONDON 'GLC – Lorry Ban' 7.30pm County Hall, SE1. Spkr. Nick Lester. **Details: SERA 01-439 3749.**

LEIGHTON Grand May-Day Gala 6.30pm Market Cross Leighton Buzzard. **Details: Leighton & Linsdale Labour Party LB 373814.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 9629. Last perfs tonight & tomorrow at 7.30 p.m. **Shared Experience** in *'PAMELA'. 3 & 4 May at 7 p.m. NATIONAL OPERA STUDIO 7-11 May at 8 p.m. 'HARVEY & THE WALLBANGERS'.*

HALF MOON 213 Mile End Rd., 01-790 4000. Previews Mon 8 p.m. Press night Weds 7 p.m. **SWEENY TODD** by Stephen Sondheim. Opening the Half Moon's new theatre.

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Poetry

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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 28 April 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting. 'The Path to the Masters'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

TIGRAY: WAR, FAMINE AND REVOLUTION. Day Conference 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday 11 May. Susan George, John Markakis, James Petras, TPLF. Cathedral Hall, Westminster Cathedral, Ambrosden Ave, London SW1. (£2 waged, £1 unwaged). Organised by Tigray Solidarity Campaign, 12 Stansfield Rd, London SW9.

VIETNAM VICTORY Celebration 30 April County Hall. Vietnam, Lao, British speakers. Apply for tickets: D. Yuille, 01-858 7930.

STATEMENT

DO YOU SAY — 'Socialism can't work because: We will always need leaders and lead. We will always need money to give incentive to work and regulate supply and demand. Humans are naturally competitive, incapable of global co-operation? These are myths and we can prove it. For free literature write: Socialist Party of GB, 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN. Phone 01-622 3811.

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LABOUR LAND CAMPAIGN NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Saturday 15th June 1985
GLC County Hall, London, 10.15am-5.30pm

LAND ABUSE IN BRITAIN

The Socialist Case for reform To be opened by Tony Benn

This Conference aims to show how land issues fundamentally underlie and relate to policies for employment, the economy and the environment.

Workshops and debates led by MPs, Trade Unionists, Environmental and Community Groups.

Chair Dave Wetzel with Frank Dobson MP, Bryan Gould MP, Tony Banks MP, and John Frazer MP.

This is your chance to put your views and help form a socialist land policy.

For more details and a registration form contact: Clive Nelson, 71 Glenwood Close, Harrow, Middx HA1 2QN. Tel. 01-427 2940.

The Labour Land Campaign is also holding a meeting in Hereford on 18 May at the Shire Hall from 11am-1pm. The speakers will be Dave Wetzel and a representative of the Agricultural Workers Union on the subject of 'Why Labour need a Land Policy'. All welcome.

HEARTSEARCH

AFFECTIONATE MALE, 35, graduate, bearded, spectacled, single, slim, non-smoker, interested classical music, literature, art, countryside, current affairs, seeks intelligent London female for loving, long-term relationship. Box (17)0724.

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ATTRACTIVE WOMAN with warmth and wit, late thirties, absorbing professional career and close circle of friends. Enjoys Arts, politics, countryside and good conversation. Seeks intelligent humorous man up to late forties with reasonably established professional or business career. Photo' appreciated. London area. Box (17)0686.

CREEPY, INSECURE little bastard seeks similar. I am 29 and male. W. Yorks or London. Box (17)0683.

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DISHEARTENED CNDer seeks woman, 18-25, for friendship and hope. I'm a mature 18, socialist/green, 6ft, attractive, kind, gentle male. All interests shared. London but will travel. Please reply someone. Box (17)0694.

ENTERPRISING, EDUCATED, travelled, fun grandmother, wide interests, needs warm-hearted, financially secure male counterpart, mutual permanent cherishing, sharing his career, retirement, new life-style. 60+. Box (16)0641.

FEMALE GRADUATE, 31, (London), fairly attractive, seeks caring, educated, unmaterialistic, country-loving, thinking, feeling, communicating, socialist man, with many interests, casual not smart. Photo? Box (17)0695.

HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL professional man, Cambridge graduate, personable, fifties, tied, very wide cultural interests, left-wing politics, avid reader especially of history and philosophy, but also enjoys the lighter side of life including good food and wine, seeks discreet but warm and caring relationship with lady, 30-50, of similar interests, perhaps also tied, and perhaps with own place in Central London. Box (17)0698.

INTELLIGENT, SLIM, attractive female (32), Indian origin, separated, one child of mixed marriage. Enjoys music, cinema, books, Guardian reader, seeks caring, solvent male with similar interests. View — marriage. London area. Box (16) 0659.

KINDNESS IN women, not their beauteous looks shall win my love (beauty helps). I'm male, 40, professional with Scottish base: unwimpish, strong and presentable, but gentle and vulnerable: passion for communication. Is there a fellow risk-taker? Box (17) 0707.

LECTURER, 46, divorced, single parent. Enjoys music, theatre, walking, badminton and much more. Seeks lady to share same and probably more. Lives Staffs, works Leics. Box (17)0706.

LONDON LANGUAGE major, girlish 40, seeks professional, gentle man, 38-58, wide horizons, humour, intelligence, to share delight in travel, theatre, literature & life. Photo please. Box (17)0728.

LONELY LONDON woman, tall, slimish, 34, interests: theatre, cycling, gardening, politics, friends, food. Seeks man (30-40ish), for initially light-hearted relationship. Box (17)0708.

MALE, 33, single, lively but lonely, loves music, arts, people and conversation, seeks female for honest friendship, possibly deeper relationship. West Yorkshire. Box (17)0685.

MALE PARAGON sought by fascinating, experienced but now lonely woman in her fifties. Must be tall, in 50s/60s, caring, humorous, solvent, unattached, living in London area, interested in the arts, current affairs, having fun, talking, driving out to country pubs for Sunday lunch. Assured but not flashy, in charge but not dominating. Box (17)0687.

MALE TEACHER and musician, 31, stable, thoughtful, keen on travel, walking, people, books, seeks new female friend, Midlands, north of Birmingham. Box (17)0722.

NATURIST MALE, 30, seeks lady for summertime visits to country and seaside. Response from single parent would be welcome. Box (17)0703.

NIGERIAN MALE, 36, 5' 9" tall, black, unemployed, unmaterialistic, jazz lover, living in London Council flat, easy-going, seeks nice female for friendship, possibly marriage. Box (17)0693.

OCCASIONAL ESCAPISM sought with intelligent, caring, sensual lady, age, nationality unimportant. Man (40), offers gentleness, solvency and skills acquired in the East. Box (16)0669.

OXFORD, DREAMING spires more fun with company! Tall, energetic, cultured, academic-type male sought by lively divorcee, mid-40s, to share laughter/activities in city/countryside. Box (17)0711.

POSITIVE DIVORCED man, 46, good friend, affectionate, attentive partner, seeks hedonistic, sincere, lasting relationship (professional/financial status not deciding factor), with compatible female, London. Box (17)0697.

PROFESSIONAL INDIAN gentleman, 49, lives in Coventry, wishes to meet someone to really care for, and who needs to be wanted as I do. Box (17)0692.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, 40s, London, seeks sincere relationship with broad-minded, attractive female, possibly with business or academic background. Interests include: countryside, conversations, doing things together, science. Box (17)0712.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, late fifties, widower, living in the countryside, but close to a City in Norway, seeks a woman for long-term relationship. Box (17)0713.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, 49, interesting career, needing extend social life, varied interests, wishes to meet unattached, personable man, 45-55. Box (16)0676.

RELAXED, WARM, s/div. gentleman enjoying books, theatre, sought to correspond with by div. female, 45. Into politics, philosophy, theology and the odd night out. Box (16)0635.

SARTRE TYPE looking for Simone de Beauvoir. Left-wing intellectual theoretical physicist, with deep interest in the arts, classical music, philosophy etc. seeks sympathetic female for loving relationship. I am 27, 5' 4" and cuddly. All letters answered. London area. Box (15)0627.

SEMI-RETIRED gentleman, City interests, literary and cultural pursuits, writes, broadcasts, appreciates good living, seeks like-minded lady for congenial get togethers London. Box (17)0655.

SINGLE PLUMP, attractive, Malaysian female, 45, seeks genuine left-wing male, interests in Third World countries, food, travel, and long-term caring, committed relationship. London. Box (16)0653.

SOPHISTICATED LADY (39), would like company of educated gentleman, especially to wine and dine her, as she is getting hungry. Box (17)0727.

SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL man, many opportunities to travel Europe, America, Asia, wide interests, non-smoker, fifty, divorced, seeks intelligent attractive woman, similar age or younger, N. London/Herts, for companionship, travel, love, marriage. Box (17)0709.

TALL, TAUREAN male, 50, married but separate social life, seeks woman up to 40ish, to join him for film/concert outings in London. Box (17)0682.

6FT TALL, slim male graduate, 24, living in East Cheshire, quiet personality, but having many interests, would like to meet a female for friendship. Box (17)0696.

THE MARRIAGE BUREAU (Heather Jenner), 124 New Bond St, W1. 01-629 9634. Individual attention.

UNIVERSITY LECTURER, PhD, 30, author, with varied interests, needs a lady for friendship, relationship perhaps marriage. Glasgow based but can travel. Box (17)0715.

WEST YORKSHIRE female, 37, cottage, car, 2 cats, CND, ASH, Greenpeace supporter, seeks new female friends, to share pleasure of good company, food, wine, theatre, walks, weekends, holidays? Etc. Box (17)0688.

ZANY BLONDE student, 25, noted for good sense of humour, and vivid imagination, and knows how to use it! Seeks considerate lover, no strings. London or South. Photo please. Box (17)0721.

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